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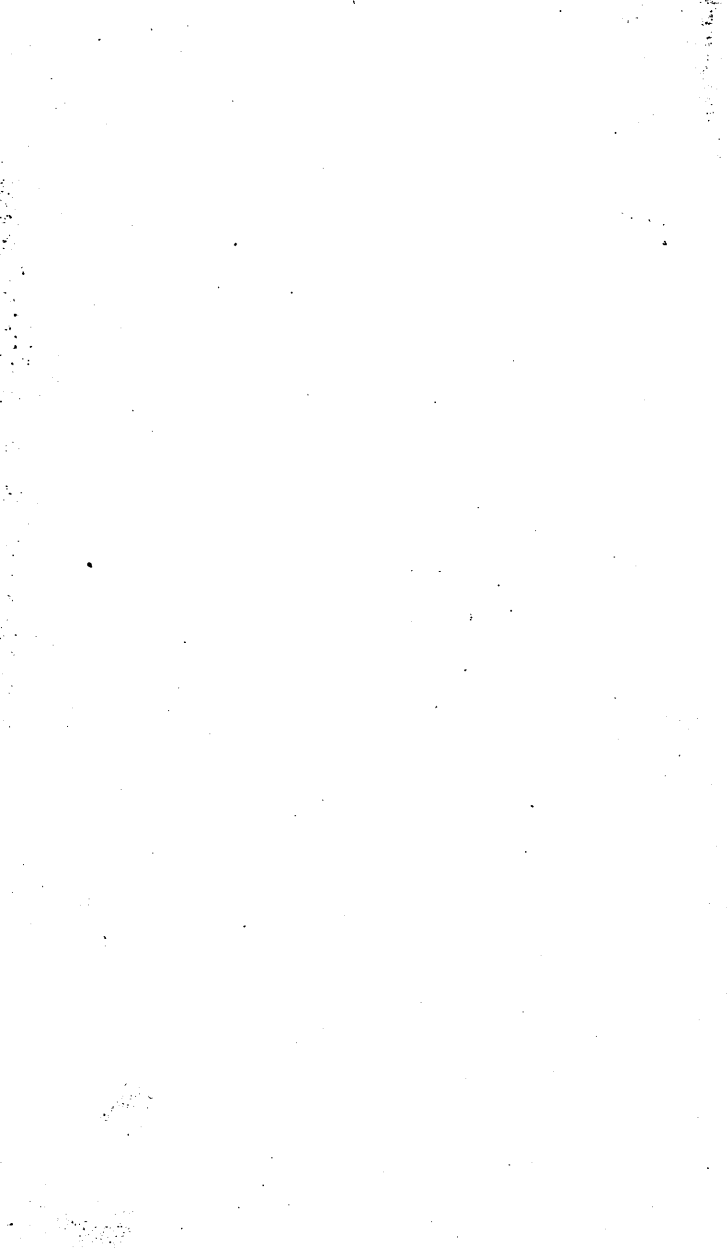


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SERMONS.



SERMONS.
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THE
YOUNG MAN
TO
YOUNG MAN

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TO THE

REV. JAMES DUKE COLERIDGE, LL. D.

VICAR OF THORVERTON,

AND PREBENDARY OF EXETER,

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF PAST ENCOURAGEMENT

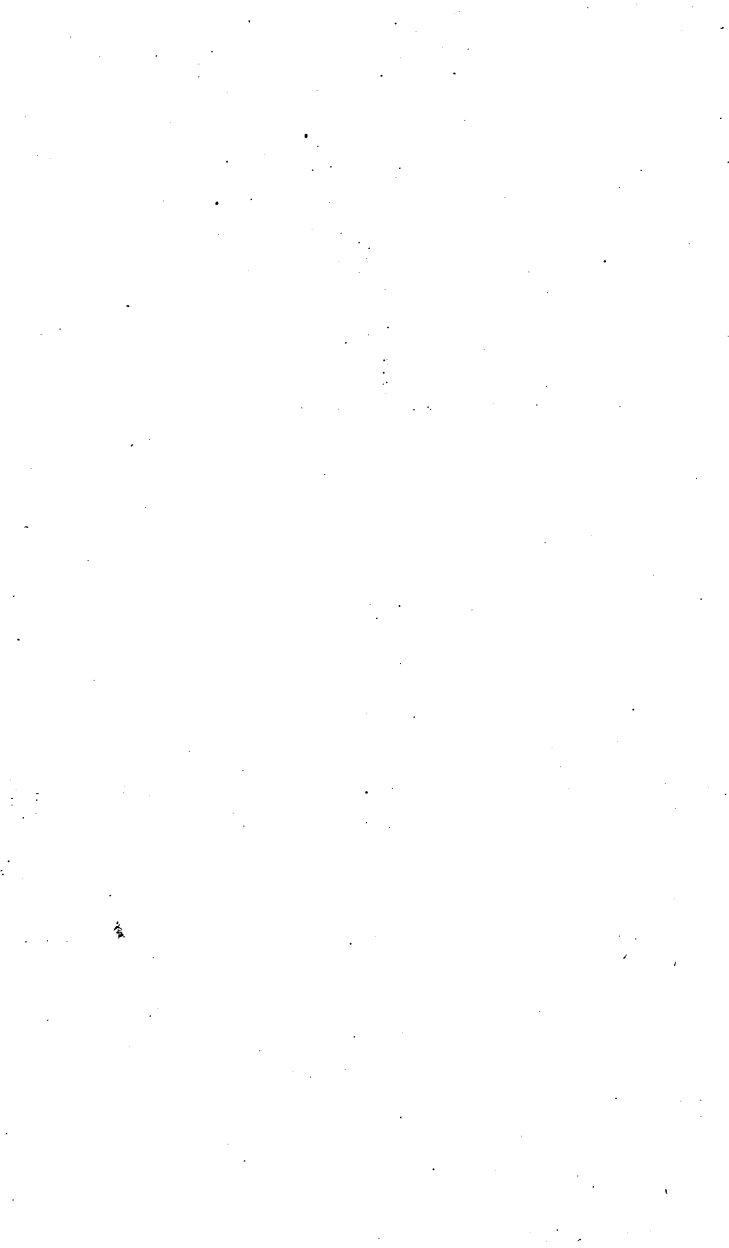
AND PRESENT KINDNESS,

This Volume

IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS SINCERE AND OBLIGED FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



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SERMON I.

EVERY MAN A SINNER.

1 S. JOHN I. 8, 9.

“IF WE SAY WE HAVE NO SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US: BUT IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.”

It is very possible that a man may come into the Church of God, and not regard himself as a sinner. He may think that what is generally affirmed about human depravity is exaggerated; that, for himself, he is not conscious of sin to any great extent; that it is the general custom, respectable, decent, and affords a good example, nay, it is a duty we owe to Almighty God, to come to Church—but he has no feeling or sympathy

for the strong expressions, which are constantly occurring about man's guiltiness—they apply not, he thinks, to him, and are, indeed, words without meaning. There is also another class, who, it is true, speak much of man's sinfulness, who make it a main point of their creed, who make the most liberal confessions of it, and insist upon it at the corners of the streets—yet it is only as a general truth, not as their own case personally. It does not weigh heavy upon these persons, that they themselves have and do commit such and such sins, that not only are they sinners in general, but they individually, they personally—are angry without cause, envious, uncharitable, unkind, sensual, covetous. It is indeed a circumstance which ought to alarm us, that those, who abound most in their acknowledgments of man's sinfulness, seem to make these confessions too often as an excuse for their own wickedness,—they confess aloud man's wickedness, yet remain wicked—nay, the more wicked they are, the more sensual, covetous, or unruly; the more do they insist upon it, that man is depraved. And so these arrive at the same point with the others, that is, they do not

blame *themselves* for sin, they accuse man in general, they accuse man's nature : but they do not accuse *themselves*.

When such persons come within our doors they are immediately met with these words, of our text, " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," and it is well they should be so met—for it is quite necessary they should be undeceived—undeceived now—that they be not more terribly undeceived hereafter. It is in the Creed of the Catholic Church, that JESUS CHRIST will come to judge the quick and dead, that they who have done good shall go unto life eternal, and they that have done evil to everlasting fire. It is in the Scriptures, that God will judge us according to our works ; that there is a book in which all things are written ; that it will be opened at the last day ; that the sins of men, will be read out from that book ; and that all things, ever done, ever spoken, ever thought, are open to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do, because He knoweth the very secrets and intents of the heart. Suppose then, that a man either does not know that he is a sinner—or will not confess it, or that at

least he thinks, no hasty step, no especial pains, need be taken to remove his sin. In this state he dies: and then the judgment comes and he is undeceived, when it is too late to repent, and to have his sins undone. Better surely to be convinced of sin now than then, better to know ourselves, and examine our hearts, and understand our faults and confess them before God, and crave His pardon, and have our sins washed out in the present world, than to have them staring us in the face in the judgment; for sins we *have*, “if a man say, I have no sin, he deceiveth himself and the truth is not in him.”

In order to prove this I will not speak of those great sins, which many men commit; for every one will confess that the murderer, the drunkard, and the adulterer are sinners. About this there will be no dispute: nay, those men, who are conscious that they only entertain hatred and malice, or overreach their neighbour, or use violent language, or encourage bad thoughts; even these, however they may hope that they shall be dealt lightly with, will hardly say of themselves, I have no sin. But there are others, far be-

yond these—others, the salt of the earth, who do not pretend to be free from sin, as will be evident from the following considerations.

What are Christians said to be in Scripture? They are called God's subjects, God's servants, and God's children. Now no man can be without sin, or free from blame, who standing in certain relations to Almighty God, fails in one jot or one tittle of those duties, which that relationship implies.

Christian men and women, ye are in the first place the subjects of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Scripture distinctly says that ye are in a kingdom and your King is CHRIST. Thus Almighty God speaking by the prophet Daniel, of times yet future, says,—“The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . . and it shall stand for ever.” John the Baptist cried, Repent, for “the kingdom of heaven is nigh at hand.” To the Jews our LORD said, No doubt “the kingdom of God is come unto you.” To the young man who was almost a Christian, He said, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” Unto His Apostles,

“I appoint unto you a kingdom ;” and again, “I give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” And then to Christians it is said, that God hath translated them into the kingdom of His dear Son, and that He hath “called them to His kingdom and glory.” This being so, if ye are Christians at all, ye are in a kingdom, and JESUS CHRIST is your King. But all subjects are required to obey. There are laws and constitutions and ordinances in every kingdom, and he who does not give them his obedience, is liable to punishment. He is a transgressor of the law, and has sinned against the lawgiver and ruler. There are certain conditions and an understanding upon which only he can be protected, and upon his non-fulfilment or violation of them he is a transgressor. We have been brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son—He is our King. He hath set forth laws which are to be found in the holy Scriptures, and that we may not complain hereafter, when we come to be judged : that we may not say we did not know what JESUS CHRIST required of His subjects ; that we may not be ignorant of what we ought to do and believe, He hath appointed persons

to teach us these things, when we become His subjects. You are familiar with them, brethren—you know the requirements of JESUS CHRIST. You have been taught the Creed, you know the Commandments, and are well aware of the understanding upon which JESUS CHRIST hath received us into His kingdom upon earth, and will alone give us a crown of glory. These are—that we renounce the devil, and the sinful lusts of the flesh—that we believe all the articles of the Christian faith—that we keep God's holy Will and Commandments. Have you then been true subjects to your King? You *know* His laws, have you kept them? Who will venture to say thus much? Perhaps you have not kept that promise to believe the Articles of the faith; it may be you have doubted some, or denied others. At all events consider the many evil thoughts which have come into your mind, the many evil deeds to which you have been tempted; and think if whether all your life, without let or hindrance, up to this hour, you have always resisted the devil, and kept God's law? But if you have not, then cannot you say, I have no sin.

But again, in the Holy Scripture you are

said to be the servants of CHRIST, in order to complete the notion of what you owe to Him. "Ye call Me," He says, "Master and LORD, and so I am." Now what is the duty of a servant? What would a master, especially such a Master, as GOD's only SON, expect at the hands of a faithful and true servant? not only that he would do His bidding, but that he would do it with promptitude and care; not only that he would do it when compelled, but that he would do it spontaneously and freely; not only upon an occasion now and then, but that he would be ever ministering to his Master. "Blessed is that servant whom his LORD when He cometh shall find so doing." The aged Anna, the devout Simeon, were such servants—they waited upon Him day and night in the temple, they ministered unto Him in alms, and fastings, and prayers, and sent up to Him the service of continual praise. The women of Galilee were such servants. They attended Him to the Cross, received His body, performed for Him the last sad office, and in their warm-hearted and ready care, were the first at the sepulchre, to behold Him risen from the dead. Such servants were the early

Christians, when to please their Master, they gave up all they had ; when, because CHRIST wanted them for His Church and for His poor, they freely surrendered their possessions, and left themselves in penury. Such servants were His holy Apostles, filled with such burning zeal, that they left father and mother, and wife and child, and went from clime to clime, and encountered imprisonments and persecutions for His Name's sake. Such servants too, were the Martyrs, that glorious company, men who jeopardied their lives unto the death, men ! nay, there were *women and little children*, who shed the last drop of their blood, and poured out their life, for Him the King of Martyrs, and Saviour of the world. O what continuous and faithful service did they pay, who thus counted not their lives dear unto themselves, and who trod in His bloodstained footsteps here, that they might join the immortal train of His servants, and eternally wait upon Him in the realms of Peace. And now in comparison with these, what are the poor services which you pay Him ? Can any one say that, as the servant of JESUS CHRIST, he is without sin ? If they gave Him so much,

all their time, all their goods, all their happiness, and their very life, and yet would not have claimed to be free from sin, what must be our confession—who have comparatively no alms, no prayers, no self-denial, no self-sacrifice, who have in truth done nothing worthy a true servant of God?

But yet again, you have undoubtedly failed as His subjects and servants, but you are called also the sons of God. “Behold what love the FATHER hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” Beloved, now are we the sons of God. Well then; if you have paid your heavenly FATHER but a slight service, at least you have done it with heartiness and affection: this is expected from children. No more is looked for from a subject, than that he obey and support the laws—servants must be careful and diligent, but a child must *love*. “He hath put the Spirit of His SON into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, FATHER.” We call upon Him daily, “Our FATHER.” A child for the most part loves his parent—he is drawn to him closer than to the others—he is loth to part with him—he rejoices to be with him—he is happy in his company—he

is proud of his approval—he leaps to do his pleasure. Children of God, is it so with you? Oh, if you pay any of a child's duties, how little is there of the child's spirit! His love, his devotedness, the delight he feels in his father's company, where are these? How seldom do you betake yourself to your prayers, and yet in your prayers you meet God; how coldly do you utter your requests, and what little gladness is there in your meeting! And if a father were away, a child, one would think, would like to hear and read of him; to contemplate his writing, and to study his word; and yet with what indifference do you approach the Scriptures—the very Words and Epistles of God; and yet again, what is the Holy Communion, but the feast wherein you have communion with God. Surely it is in part called so, because there God dwelleth in us, and we in God; God is one with us, and we one with God. There He has promised to meet us, there to be with us, there to visit us, and there to strengthen and refresh us; and yet how slow are we on our part, how loth, how backward; surely we are proved to be sinners once more because we are undutiful children

—we do not love Him, we had rather keep away from Him. As subjects, and as servants, and as sons, we have gone away backward.

Then, my brother, deceive thyself no longer : thou art a sinner : then listen to the instructions of the Apostle, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” This is the first step : confess thy sins—kneel and confess them to God. Why is so much made of confession ? Why is it said that if thou confessest thy sins, God will forgive ?—because so much is implied in confession. How can you confess sins of which you are ignorant ? Therefore he who confesses *knows* his sin. Who that is not humble-minded will confess ? therefore to confess your sins implies humility. Who would confess his sins that is not sorry and vexed for them ? and therefore the confession of sins implies repentance. Who would confess his sins, save in the hope and faith of being pardoned ? and therefore confession implies a faith in CHRIST’S pardoning mercy. And it is because it involves all these things ; involves, in short, a turning from sin to

God, that it is said, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

And yet that you may not be deceived, but thoroughly understand what is meant by a true confession; and may not suppose that you have merely to say, perhaps on your death-bed, "LORD I am a sinner," with your lips; the Church adds the following sentence. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." Some men may think that they are not sinners; they deceive themselves. Others may think, that, being sinners, it is enough if they confess it with their lips; they also deceive themselves. We are sinners and we must confess our sins, but not only so, we must turn from them. When, in the strength of JESUS CHRIST, the sinner turneth away from the wickedness which he hath committed, he shall save his soul alive, but not till then.

And now what shall we say? Thou, O God, hast brought it home to us, that we are sinners, even if we are not flagrant transgressors; we have failed in our duties as

servants, as subjects, as sons. We acknowledge, we avow this with our lips, make us return to Thee in our lives: we will deceive ourselves no longer. We know what a Christian should be: we know the divine heavenly pattern set before us, JESUS CHRIST, and we have not attempted to follow Him. Turn us, O LORD, turn our hearts as the rivers of the south—lead us to obey Thee, to wait on Thee, to love Thee—then shall we have confidence—because “when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, Thou art faithful and just to forgive him his sins and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness.”

SERMON II.

SATAN THE TEMPTER TO SIN.

EPH. VI. 10, 11.

“MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD, AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL.”

THE Apostle inculcates in the Epistle for to-day, one of those many important truths, which “hearing we hear not,” a truth I mean, which, being plainly set down in our Bibles, we dare not deny, and yet which, as far as one’s observation goes, the generality of Christians hold in a very unreal manner. It is plainly stated in Scripture—it brought the SAVIOUR from heaven—it immediately made necessary, all that humiliation, all those cares, all those marvellous

sufferings, all that blood-shedding, by which alone Almighty God recovered man, and yet it has no, or little, practical power. We do not deny it, yet we are hardly persuaded of it, we believe as though we believed not.

The truth to which I refer is, that, over and above our natural desire to sin, and the corruption that remains, even in them that are regenerate, there is a wicked spirit ever wakeful to apply the torch, and arouse our passions. There are not only within us an aptitude to be moved to certain outward objects, and an inward love and longing for them; but there is an active Being, terribly powerful, taking these objects for which we have a sympathy, one by one, at the fitting time, at the opportune moment, when we are weak, or excited, or have turned our eyes from God, urging them upon us with winning words, coloured with a false deceitful beauty, till he "have beguiled us as he beguiled Eve through his subtilty," and "sin, when it is finished, have brought forth death." This is the truth the Apostle sets before us: "Be strong in the LORD and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God"—for what

purpose? "That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Let us try, with God's help, to realize and grasp the truth that we have such an enemy, and then see how we may guard against him.

The faith of the holy Catholic Church upon this subject, is sufficiently known. Before being enrolled among her members, and taken into her company, and made partakers of her privileges, and heritage, people have ever been required to renounce the devil and his works. For what is the Church, but an assemblage of people gathered together in CHRIST, redeemed by His blood, sanctified by His Spirit, to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works? But the devil tempts to wicked works, and therefore all are required, as a condition to their being made partakers of CHRIST, that they shall live as CHRIST lived, and renounce him who would make them live otherwise. And this requirement of course shows the faith of the Church, that there is such a being as the devil, that he is very dangerous and powerful, that he easily leads people away; and therefore she has

laid this especial obligation on her people, "you shall and must renounce his service, and you shall solemnly declare that you will do so, or you cannot be of our company, and if, after you have been received into our company you forget your promises and follow him, you cannot enter heaven."

This has been the practice, founded on the faith of the whole Christian Church from the first; and is there not reason for it in Scripture? Who tempted our first parents? Who tempted Cain to murder? Who urged it upon Job to curse his Maker? Who fanned the jealousy of Saul to slay the deliverer of him and of his people, and to consult with her who had an evil spirit? Who made David number the people? Whom did our GOD and SAVIOUR meet in the dreary wilderness? Who led to S. Peter's denial, to Ananias' sin, and to that crime which stands out singly from all others? It is written, "After the sop Satan entered unto him, and JESUS said, What thou doest, do quickly." These few notices will remind you of many others, and the constant reference that is made to the agency of Satan in Holy Scripture, how that to every dark deed he is the

minister, and how needful is that advice, Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Consider how he is described in the sacred Scriptures, to set us on our guard. In our text he is said to be very subtle, "that ye may be able to stand against the *wiles* of the devil." Hence he seems to have selected from the creatures of the earth, that which was most like himself to deceive our mother, for "the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, which the LORD GOD had made." And S. Paul says, it was by this particular quality that he succeeded, "he beguiled Eve, through his subtilty." Alas, when we are so often entrapped, and have so little power against the snares of men, what hopes have we in ourselves against the snares of the devil? When one hears people say concerning their fellow-creatures, of so inferior subtilty, and so limited powers, and whose plans are comparatively open to our sight, and may be counteracted; "I have been deceived," what shall we poor helpless ones do against a foe so wily, so unwearied, so powerful, of such deep malice, and yet invisible? For thus too is he represented, as very powerful:

“ We wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world :” as ever wakeful in his enmity, “ Be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour :” and yet we cannot behold him. It must be a matter of faith with us, that there is such a being, that he prowls around us, that he is on the watch to destroy our souls, and that we must be constantly on our guard, and pray against him ; this is a matter of pure faith, it is not given us to behold him ; we cannot see his affrighting form, or fearful shape.

And yet if, because we cannot see the evil spirit, one is disposed to doubt his existence, his power, his malice ; I would just remind him that we cannot see any spirits, and do you therefore disbelieve ? We can only see things material, such as flesh and bones, but “ a spirit hath not flesh and bones.” Exhibit to me your own soul : you believe that you have a soul ; produce it, place it before my eyes, touch it with your hands ; you know you cannot, for it is a spirit, and yet you believe in the existence of that spirit ; so likewise you believe in the spirits of just men

made perfect ; you believe that the spirits of Abraham and the Patriarchs, of the Apostles, and holy martyrs are at rest. You believe in the blessed angels who are ministering spirits ; and you believe, surely you believe in God Who is a Spirit. So that all which remains to be believed is, that there are *bad* spirits as well as good ; and how can you doubt this, unless you throw away the Bible ? Deny this, and you may deny every truth it contains, for there are few truths so distinctly set forth as the one before us. The being of whom I have spoken is called at various times the slanderer and accuser, whence the word Devil, Satan, which means “adversary,” “the tempter,” “the wicked one,” “the destroyer,” none of which words can be applied to the good spirits ; and lastly, in opposition to God and His hosts, and to the armies of heaven, we read, “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world ; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” And S. Peter tells us : “God spared not the

angels that sinned, but cast them down into hell." And S. Jude informs us: "The angels which kept not their first estate He hath reserved until the judgment of the last day." How is it possible then for a Christian to doubt this doctrine, that there are innumerable wicked spirits around and about us ;—" my name is Legion ;"—that there is one, their commander and chief, " the prince of the powers of the air ;" that from hatred to God he would destroy God's children ; that he directs his forces with deep skill combinedly and separately against our souls, and that we every one of us are in constant danger " from the *wiles* of the devil."

Such and thus fearful is our adversary : and now what are the wiles with which he deceives us ? Alas, it is impossible for us to number them : he suits his temptations to every taste, and has a snare laid for every human creature ; yet let us think of our Master's temptations, and we shall have some notion where our danger lies.

Our blessed SAVIOUR went up into the wilderness, to be assailed by Satan and to conquer him ; to conquer him for us, that in JESUS CHRIST we may conquer him too ;

that we His members, by His strength and support, may keep him under our feet, whom the LORD had laid prostrate. But if Satan had prevailed, which he could not, he would have hindered all our SAVIOUR came to achieve, I mean our forgiveness, freedom, and glory. This was the contest: whether the SON of GOD should rescue mankind from his grasp or not. For this the devil strove; to retain in his dark power the human family, to despise GOD thereby, and to people through successive generations the desolate halls of his horrid kingdom. We may well suppose then that he would exercise his subtlest wiles against our SAVIOUR. And now what were they?

“And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards an hungred. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the SON of GOD, command that these stones be made bread.” Our blessed LORD was GOD, and yet a man like ourselves: He felt hunger, and thirst, and sorrow, as we do; His frame was no stronger than ours; He had fasted forty days and forty nights, and now the devil came to Him. This then is one class of temptations

by which the devil assails us: I mean the wants and appetites of the flesh. We are but men, poor flesh and blood, who must be sustained, and shall still want meat, and drink, and raiment, and a covering, and other satisfactions which God has bestowed upon us. All these may be used to His honour and His glory when they are received with thankful hearts. But there is a line which must not be passed, when for merely recruiting our strength, we give way to vicious appetites and carnal pleasures. The Christian man, by the Spirit of CHRIST, must exercise a strict rule over his body; he hath crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, he is temperate in all things. Strait is the road, and narrow is the way, and he restrains and suspects all his enjoyments, lest they should pass into sins. And well may he do so. It is no imaginary picture, that whether he beholds him or not, there is by his side, when he eats and when he drinks, and when he abandons himself to pleasure, and gives up the control over his senses to the wild rule of appetite; that there is, watching his opportunity to draw that soul from the strict and holy path of duty, to the

devious one of sin,—our adversary the devil. For tell me, when you contemplate the deformed countenance of anger, or the bloated appearance of gluttony, or the red eye of drunkenness, or other forms of vice, must not the devil have done this? Has he not led men to these excesses? Could a person, unless controlled and possessed by a fiend, thus ruin himself soul and body? Ah! the devil met in his case no holy text “It is written,” no guard kept, no prayers said, no SAVIOUR called upon to help, and he hath enwrapped him in chains, and enslaved him by his appetites.

Then the devil setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, “If Thou be the SON of GOD, cast Thyself down, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee.”

Another class of temptations is this, when, although GOD hath appointed ordinary, and easy, and well-known methods, men seek out extraordinary ones, still trusting to His goodness. The devil set our LORD on a pinnacle of the temple. Perhaps there were steps to that height, by which He could descend; why then cast Himself to the ground, why seek

to be saved by a miracle, when He could be saved without one. "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God."

Observe the man before you: surely the devil has prevailed with him. He is one who hath committed some sins, and been generally negligent, and hath taken little care of his soul. He was the beloved child of Christian parents, and was nurtured in the truths of CHRIST, and was watched early by a mother's love, and hath not forgotten the early prayers which he said at her knee, and, though he be a prodigal, still those days of his innocent childhood come back upon him, and he hears the village bell calling him to prayer, and he knows, well knows, from his early teaching, that there is a way back to God; that he must repent, that he must cast away his sin, that he must be a new man, that he must pray, that he must think, and give his life to religion now at the present hour, whilst he is able, because now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. This he knows: it is the ordinary, fixed, appointed method, which if he follow through JESUS CHRIST, he shall be saved. But there is one by his side who

says, "Repent not yet: true, this is the ordinary way, but trust to a miracle; trust to a death-bed repentance; trust to the last moment, when you cannot speak, nor think, and are unable to breathe a prayer; trust to the goodness of the SAVIOUR, Whom you have ever despised. Thou shalt not surely die." Did Eve find it so? Will you find it so? Was ever such a deceit? When there is a plain way before you, why seek one of your own? Why cast yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple? Why expect that a miracle shall be wrought, and signs and wonders? And thus it is in a thousand cases, when men would reach to the end without travelling by the means; when they would be learned without study, skilful without industry, healthful without sobriety, or when they hope to be received into heaven without repenting, or to repent without grace, or to have grace without the Sacraments, or to receive the grace of the Sacraments without a prepared heart, or think that their heart can be prepared aright without self-discipline and examination. In short, it is the common folly of all those who despise appointed ways for their own. God

has appointed certain ways to certain ends, certain conditions to certain results. A great many men despise and set these aside. The fiend whispers, "Take your own course, cast thyself down, be bold, all will be well in the end." Brethren, turn from the devil, and hear your LORD :—"Thou shalt not *tempt* the LORD thy God."

"Again the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them : and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."

This then is another class of temptations—worldly goods. God Almighty often bestows worldly goods. He did so in the case of Solomon. He prayed for a wise and understanding heart, and, as he did *not* ask for them, God gave him over and above riches and honours. But there are cases innumerable where riches and honour must be the gifts of Satan ; where men set about attaining them by ways and means, which God must curse—and the devil can alone reward. God has been pleased to permit, that wrong ways, of getting rich or honourable, shall be suggested to

man—and that he who suggests and tempts shall be able to reward—shall be able to bestow those temporary gratifications which they are seeking—something to satisfy for the present their sinful hearts, and to dazzle and amuse—though shortly to be turned into wormwood and ashes, into mocking fiends, and biting serpents. Hence we are assured that the temptation and the reward of Naboth's vineyard to King Ahab, was not God's but Satan's—for God tempteth no man; but yet for Ahab's wickedness He kept still while the devil pointed out the field, and showed the way to gain it; and when Ahab had taken his advice, bestowed the gift. "This," he said, "will I give thee, only fall down and worship me—do as I tell thee—put an innocent man to death, or let thy wife do it, and I will give thee the field."

And when we read of bold and unscrupulous men passing through seas of blood to thrones and kingdoms, moving from place to place like desolating angels, with famine in their right hand, and pestilence in their left; wasting whole villages, dismantling cities, making the fair and fruitful fields a howling wilderness; when we read of such,

leaving nothing to mark their course but tenantless homes, and the cries of widows and orphans—and at home establishing their success by shrinking at no crime; who shall we say has rewarded them? Does God reward crime? No! But the devil showeth them all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, to be thus purchased, “*I give thee.*”

The rule then which we must lay down is this—if we are true servants of JESUS CHRIST, and walk by the light of His Holy Spirit, and seek to approve ourselves conscientiously in the sight of God doing nothing for the world contrary to His law, and are then prosperous it is God’s gift. But if we have become rich by any means which our conscience disapproves, and God disallows, then are our gifts from the devil, for we have worshipped *him*, by committing the sin, which *he* put into our hearts; and we have now in our life-time the good things, which the grave will take from us, and for which we have no substitute.

I have pointed out to you, my brethren, your foe—I have shown you some of his wiles; there is yet one point which I must

mention, though briefly—how are we to guard against him? The first thing is to be *suspicious*. “Watch,” says our LORD,—“be vigilant,” says S. Peter,—suspect him as always at hand; in your meals, in your enjoyments, in your work, in your getting up, in your lying down, in your wakeful hours, with companions, and when alone; test what you are doing and what you are thinking about, and what you propose to do, by the will of CHRIST. Be suspicious of what seems to be drawing you away from the Spirit and the life of JESUS; this is the first rule. Men in beleaguered cities, keep watchmen on their towers, and close not their eyes, or rest their wearied limbs, when foes are around them; they pace watchfully to and fro, and have ears open to each sound, though it be but the sighing of the wind, or the falling of a leaf. Christian warrior, thus guard thy own soul.

2. Next, if according to this advice you carefully watch, you will see the enemy coming; that is, you will see that you are likely to transgress. Then, says the Apostle, “resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” “Get thee behind Me, Satan,” said our LORD, and

the devil departed from Him. Resist the devil when he begins to tempt. Quench the beginnings of temptation; for it is easier to stop the enemy at the walls, than, when he has entered, to drive him out; easier not to enter on a sin, than when we have indulged it, to lay it aside.

3. But, it will be answered, if Satan be such an one as is described, malicious, wily, powerful, and a spirit too, with a thousand spirits to aid him, how can I (weak and frail as I am,) resist him for a moment? Indeed I feel my weakness to withstand any temptation. So much the better; I mean, so much the better, that you should not in this contest trust to your own strength, but flee unto your God. It is absolutely necessary that you should feel your weakness, for then you are strongest. "When I am weak then am I strong." He is the most perfect Christian—and contends successfully with Satan, who fights him, not in his own strength but God's. "Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand." Our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST prevailed over Satan in the wilderness: it is in CHRIST, as a member of CHRIST,

by strength and power dwelling in us derived from Him, that the saints from that day to this, have conquered the devil. This then is the last rule I will at present propose—"prayer." Cease not to pray : increase, if you can, your prayers, because "if you ask you shall receive, and if you seek you shall find." The devil often prevails over you ; but do you *pray* against him ? do you pray with an earnest desire, and a real wish, to be rescued from him, that you may serve CHRIST really and entirely. A man who wants a favour will earnestly ask for it ; a man who wants CHRIST will earnestly ask Him to come. If it be a matter of life and death, if a tyrant rules you, if you want freedom, you will go to one who is "stronger than he ;" not once by the way and coldly, but very often and with pressing prayers. Ask CHRIST to arm you with the whole armour of God, with spear, with sword, with helmet—with truth and righteousness and the Gospel of peace—with the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation. Ask Him ; for it is of no use to ask any one else. "He impedes the devil's rage, and infatuates his councils : He diverts his malice, and defeats his purposes : He binds him in the

chain of darkness, and gives him no power over the children of light : He suffers him to walk in solitary places, and yet fetters him that he cannot disturb the sleep of a child : He hath given him mighty power, and yet a young maiden that resists him, shall make him flee away : He hath given him vast knowledge, and yet an ignorant man can confute him, with the twelve articles of his Creed : He gave him power over the winds and made him prince of the air, and yet the breath of a holy *prayer* can drive him as far as the utmost sea.”* Am I not then right in prescribing prayer ? Suspect him—resist him—pray day and night against him—and JESUS CHRIST will enable you to stand against “the wiles of the devil.”

* Bishop Taylor.

SERMON III.

TRIALS.

1 S. PETER I. 6, 7.

“THOUGH NOW FOR A SEASON, IF NEED BE, YE ARE IN HEAVINESS THROUGH MANIFOLD TEMPTATIONS: THAT THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE PRECIOUS THAN OF GOLD WHICH PERISHETH, THOUGH IT BE TRIED WITH FIRE, MIGHT BE FOUND UNTO PRAISE AND HONOUR AND GLORY AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST.”

THE words before us are spoken to Christians, and therefore to ourselves—they are spoken to persons, called by the Apostle, in the first verse of the chapter, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God,” and in the fourth verse, “begotten to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” How great a privilege to be

chosen to eternal life. What joy to be told of a land which shall never perish, and is without grief or pain or tears ; and this land purchased by CHRIST, for those who love Him. As He Himself saith, "in My FATHER'S house are many mansions." Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, "the things which God hath laid up for them that love Him." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne ; him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God ; he that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment." "He that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, I will give him the morning star." Put all these things together and see what a blessed inheritance is reserved for those who love CHRIST and keep His commandments. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in at the gates of the city." They shall be restored to the long-lost paradise, they shall stand in the presence of the tree of life, and shall taste of the water, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and be filled with immortality and youth. Well may the Christian be delighted with such

thoughts, "wherein," says S. Peter, "ye rejoice."

But before the enjoyment of these things there are many troubles to be encountered, and, though when we fix our eyes on the country promised, we may be glad, yet may we perchance, when we look at intervening difficulties, "be in heaviness." Thus the Israelites welcomed the promises of God, sent to them by Moses, of a land flowing with milk and honey. Gladly and with triumph they marched out of Egypt, having only in their thoughts the waters and the hills of Canaan, but difficulties crossed their way and they were saddened. With such great prospects before them, yet by the Red Sea, in the howling wilderness, on the verge of the promised land, they were in heaviness through manifold temptations. "Why hast thou brought us," they said to Moses, "to perish here in the wilderness." They had dangers, and trials, and many doubts, and fearful mischances, before every man could sit under his vine and under his fig-tree in the promised land.

It is well known that the best and most devout Christians are sometimes "in heavi-

ness." Thus S. Peter, writing to the *elect*, to those who were "begotten to an incorruptible inheritance," to those "who not having seen Him, loved the LORD JESUS CHRIST," says, "now ye are in heaviness;" and heaviness means, despondency and lowness of spirits, caused by the great pressure of temptations. And it is well to mention this, because religious persons are distressed in their last moments from an opinion, as I think very pernicious, that it is necessary for every one to be confident of his salvation, or he cannot be saved. I say this is a hurtful opinion on the following grounds.

1. First, it is a known fact that hundreds of persons who have given their whole life to devotion, have never pretended to this confidence, but have utterly disclaimed it, and died without it; and to say that it is necessary, cuts off all these persons from salvation and assigns them to perdition.

2. It is well known that what makes very holy persons so diffident, is the greater and greater insight they get into their sins, by constancy in devotion, and larger supplies of grace, whereby their spiritual sight is sharpened. Thus they see the exceeding sinful-

ness of sin, and the excessive purity of God, much more clearly than they did at their first conversion. It has not unfrequently been the case with the highest saints, that, along with other graces, fear and trembling have increased in them. S. Paul describes them, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling," "they pass their whole life in reverence and godly fear." But now it is evident, that the man who appreciates least the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the purity of God, will be the least alarmed; he who thinks sin a small matter, a life of sin a small matter, the worst sins but trifles, and easily got over, may well be comfortable in his soul and confident for the future. Why should he not be confident, especially if he be taught that this confidence is *all*, that it is the one thing needful, pardon, peace, repentance, salvation? Then he will bend his utmost efforts, not to be holy, but to be confident. And this is a thing easily done, if a man is to judge of his soul's estate by a week's enthusiasm or unguarded promises of Scripture, without ever balancing the testimony of that Scripture, by the calm sentence of common sense or common rea-

son, and without ever inquiring whether he has not violated, or left unfulfilled, the conditions, upon which only, those promises were made.

Not to mention then, at present, any other reasons, the doctrine that *assurance is necessary for every one*, is, I think, hurtful, for the two I have mentioned, and which I will now repeat.

First, it makes the good and pious sad, whom the LORD has not made sad, by denying to the holiest and best, salvation.

Secondly, by teaching that confidence is the one thing needful, it allows carelessness, and discountenances holy living. According to this, it is not the best man, but the most confident who will be saved. "The most humble are hereby excluded from salvation, the most presumptuous and fanatical included."*

Do not then, my brethren, think it any strange thing for the Christian man to be "in heaviness," even as to his salvation. The very SAVIOUR upon the Cross cried out, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken

* Dr. Barrow.

Me?" and in the garden it is said, "He began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy, and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death." Was this a proof of imperfection? What profaneness to say so! Nay, on the contrary, the LORD often lays the severest trial, that is, this feeling of desertion, on the most perfect, as you would place the boldest soldier in the front of the battle; for, as it is the highest honour and the greatest proof of his love to be brought near to CHRIST even in this, so are such men as I described, from their better faith, able to endure what would quite destroy a lower Christian. They know, that so far from confidence in our salvation being *necessary*, it is very often that which leads to destruction; for such as profess to have it become careless. They know also that when CHRIST loves a man well, He often puts on him this hard trial—to feel alone—and He does this to make him more strict and devout, or to try to the utmost his faith, and through the heaviest trials advance him to perfection.

Hence, then, assurance is not necessary; continual satisfaction and joy of mind are not to be looked for—the spiritual atmos-

phere is variable. There are serene days, and days of storm. He is but a poor *invalid* who always requires the sunshine, who is discontented and unhappy unless it be always bright and glowing, and who shrinks from the rain and wind. Such people say that they want the *comfort* of assurance, and they cannot go on without this comfort. But God's greatest saints have been tried by the withdrawal of comfort: this proved their strength. Their head and example, CHRIST, was thus tried. But he, who bargains for the reward before he will even commence his journey, loves himself better than God; and he who must be supported, and as it were bribed by sensible comforts all the way, must be weak in all Christian graces, in faith, in love, and endurance.

This is one temptation, assailing the very holiest, and not unfrequently on the bed of death. "When we come to die," says Bishop Wilson, "the great enemy of souls will then attack us with all his stratagems." But temptations, S. Peter says, "are manifold." Let us glance at one or two others.

1. Poverty is a great temptation, a temp-

tation which throws many "into heaviness," often indeed it leads to heaven; and the man or the woman, bereft of this world's treasures, living in cold and discomfort, impressed with the strong sense that there is for them no wealth or happiness here, have been led to fix their thoughts and then their love upon God. Men will turn to their true friend sometimes, when there is but *that* friend left; and great is the mercy of God, that He should accept of such, as turn to Him only in their despair. If however afterwards their hearts melt into love, and they be faithful and obedient, He will accept them for CHRIST's sake, whatever may have been their first motive in turning. And to these, to the people who are brought by it to their SAVIOUR, their poverty has been a blessing: as to others long illnesses, or terrible misfortunes have been, severe remedies indeed, yet health and salvation. But I am afraid it is not often that poverty has this effect. It has, (Scripture says so,) the advantages I have described, and CHRIST looks with a loving eye upon the poor: but it has its temptations, and through them, many a one is "in heaviness." Many a one having begun well

about his soul, has brooded over his distress until he has forgotten his God. That which has led some to JESUS CHRIST has driven others from Him; as in the case of Job, *his* language was, "though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;" here was piety in the midst of the heaviest distress. But his wife said, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God and die." *She* saw in her misfortunes only a reason to be angry with God, and was thus made worse by them instead of better. And it is a sore temptation to flesh and blood—a wretched, starving, dying family, miseries immediate and pressing close upon them; the thought and effort for daily food, and no apparent lifting up of the cloud, these things do withdraw men's thoughts from God, and cast them into heaviness. Now what can we say to you, beloved brethren, if any such are present, but what we said to those who were in sorrow under apparent spiritual desolation, but that this is your *very trial*—this, through God's strength in you, is what you have to surmount; "though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It is, I know, easy for those who are not suffering, or who are not in the same cir-

cumstances to speak, but still these are Scripture truths, independently of the person who utters them. This then is your trial—you must be steady to your God—your faith in His goodness must not fail—you must be regular in your devotions—you must not sin; seek first the kingdom of God, and all other things, by degrees, will be added to you.

But again, the temptations of the rich lie in another direction. They are more likely to hear anything like devotion scoffed at and despised; they, having the good things of this world, would fain have the consent of all, that religion is but a subordinate, inferior matter, that an outward regard for God is necessary, but that anything more strict, anything which will interfere with those temporal enjoyments for which they live, anything which tends to systematic worship of God, or restraint and watchfulness of self, this is to be discountenanced, and called by any evil name. These, God be praised, are not indeed the practices of all among them, for here too are the faithful; but they are the *tendencies* of those who have need of nothing, who are rich, and well off, and happy, and

well circumstanced ; who have no fears of to-morrow, and may, if they like, enjoy to-day. These are not *driven* to God, and they love not to seek Him ; spiritual pleasures involve the diminution of the earthly, and this they love not ; he who seeks heaven sacrifices earth, and this they love not. But if there be one who, notwithstanding the false views which are spread around him, catches the true one ; if there be one who sees the straight and narrow path, and resolves to seek it ; if there be one who has it in his mind to abandon what has given him no satisfaction, and to seek true joy where it is to be found ; yet the dissuasion of others, the prevalent notions—the want of support and help—a still lingering love for the world—act as impediments, and sink down his soul in heaviness. He is heavy in his mind about giving up the gay things of life, like him in the Gospel who went away sorrowful ; he is heavy at the long journey before him ; he is heavy at the little countenance he receives, nay at the hindrances thrown in his way. But cheer up, my brother, this is *your* trial—you have not the *poverty* spoken of, but you have this instead of it ; and

through tribulation of one sort and another, we must enter into the kingdom. It is a sore trial ; but, again, you must overcome it. Be steady against manifold temptations—Heaven before all, eternity before time. “ Blessed is the man who endureth temptation ; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him.

Need I more than mention, amidst “ our manifold temptations,” the heaviness which sometimes arises from the oppression and power of sin ? There are who have sinned, and would return but for the difficulty of returning. The sad custom of sinning has got fast hold of them ; and although even custom may be conquered by the help of God, yet does the necessary effort seem so great, and the labour so continuous, that at the mere thought thereof they are in heaviness.

Are there, for example, none here present who have been the slaves of evil habits—no persons over whom the very same sin has again and again prevailed ? Now, if through the grace of God you turn to the service of CHRIST, you must expect the old temptation to return upon you at times. Sin has been

your master for so many years, that it can only be rooted out by watchful perseverance, and even then your apparent progress may be so slow—your work so arduous and prolonged—and your sometime relapses, even when you thought that you had in a measure succeeded, so dispiriting—that there is great danger lest you should despond and be swallowed up in overmuch sorrow; and thus it is that men often despair, and in heaviness of soul lie down and die.

This, then, brethren, is *your* trial. Think calmly what is your besetting sin; be prepared for a long struggle. Know it will return upon you; but know, too, that God will give you the victory, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

And I must, before I end, remind you that some persons are in heaviness—they themselves know not why. None are more to be sorrowed with. There seems to be no reason—no known cause—and yet they are in lowness of spirits, and sad, and weary of the world. And this may be the case with all at some period of life; but when it is, it will be your duty to contend against that as against any other temptation. You must awake and

stand up, and actively serve God and man ; —you must not let the devil drive you to despair when CHRIST is nigh and saith in tones of kindness, “Come unto Me, ye that are weary or heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

For remember that He would not send upon you this or any other temptation were it not necessary ; He doth not visit without a purpose. “If need be,” says the apostle. The patient resigns himself to the operator’s hands with the thought—“it is necessary.” It is this, or life itself ; and this thought alone will reconcile us to the bitterest trials—it is necessary for my salvation. God would not pain me were it not for my eternal health.

Indeed, you can only be fitted for heaven, and your faith tried by adversity. Observe the Apostle’s own illustration. Gold is but rough and useless when first dug from the earth ; but it passes through the fire, and is made a king’s crown. And temptations are *your* fire ;—they are the purifying process, the burning flame through which you are to pass. By them you will be made to lose what is offensive to your Heavenly FATHER,

and you will come out from them bright only with love and faith, and the graces of the saints.

And yet, lastly, the Apostle affirms that there is this difference between you and the gold. The gold shall perish—it is the most enduring of metals, and yet when the world perisheth it shall perish ; but you who have passed through the furnace of temptation, and have retained your faithfulness to your SAVIOUR, shall never perish—you, more precious than the world's gold, shall be set in the Crown of God for ever and ever. Only keep your eyes on the heavenly country—keep them fixed on Him Who sits there, and resist temptations. Be firm to your SAVIOUR, and He will cause you to prevail and triumph ;—for you are tried in the fire that your faith may be found unto praise, and glory, and honour, at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST.

SERMON IV.

GOD'S MERCY AMIDST TEMPTATIONS.

1 COR. x. 13.

"BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL, WHO WILL NOT SUFFER YOU TO BE TEMPTED ABOVE THAT YE ARE ABLE, BUT WILL WITH THE TEMPTATION, ALSO MAKE A WAY TO ESCAPE."

IN whatever way we contemplate the dealings of Almighty God with man, we shall still find Him good and merciful. He has provided us with many gifts ; He has taught us to look up to Heaven, and to address Him as "our FATHER," and as a FATHER, the most loving, He has poured down upon us, "like the dew of Hermon which fell upon the hill of Sion," His manifold blessings. His dear SON, His Eternal Spirit, His doctrine and commandments, His life-giving Sacraments,

His Holy Church—these are His blessings. But more : not only has He bestowed these positive benefits, but, as far as it is possible, He shelters from evil. Man is a creature responsible and free, and shall be judged according to his works ; he must, therefore, generally speaking, be tried by temptation, in order that they who are approved may be made manifest ; and because, “ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him.” But it is remarkable how kindly, and tenderly, if I may so speak, our Heavenly Parent watches over the well-being of His children, and permits them to be endangered as little as is consistent with the working out of their salvation. Sometimes they are scarcely tempted at all ; sometimes they prevail over temptation ; and very often they are rescued, when they have fallen. These are the points I would to-day illustrate. The words of our SAVIOUR are expressive of His labours for us all. “ Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.”

We are taught in the LORD'S Prayer to say, "lead us not into temptation;" and though this means, "let us not be tempted so as to fall" yet our SAVIOUR in many cases answers it literally, and does not permit us even "to be tempted." This is the best and happiest way; for though recovery after illness is good, not to have been ill at all is better. This is the way of *prevention*, when the LORD does not suffer us to come in the way of temptation, or temptation to cross our path; when He throws a barrier across the earliest approaches of the tempter, and does not permit him to come near us; and in this way prevents the first step, which might lead to the second. And for this reason, though it be hard to part with them, we cannot but count such happy as are cut off in *early* childhood. We must count them happy; for our SAVIOUR said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"—"suffer them to come to Me." And the Church says, "they are undoubtedly saved:" and we are sure temptation hath been kept off from them—they have never been led into it. The taint and breath of the world's wickedness have not even blown upon them, nor taken root in

their hearts, nor borne evil fruits. CHRIST, when He made them His own, sprinkled upon them His blood, and washed away Adam's sin, and they have committed none of their own; and this is the reason why "they are undoubtedly saved." And in proportion as we realize their position, their nearness to the angels, and their freedom from many spots which pollute our own souls,—we must surely withdraw our mind from any personal loss of our own, and think of their exceeding happiness. Our estimate of these things will, of course, depend upon our faith, on the relative value we attach to earth and to heaven, and upon our having disregarded or not the difference which there is between the unsoiled and the tempted soul. But I am sure that if these things were considered as CHRIST would have us look on them, few mercies can be compared with the being kept from all temptation: and few are so happy as those who die in childhood.

But the preventing mercies of God are not limited to childhood; they extend through life. Many, many are the things which to us, my brethren, would be temptations, but that God permits us not to be exposed to

them, and it is thus only that we are safe. When, therefore, we are inclined to blame any one, whether above or below us, let us consider to what we are indebted for our preservation from the same sin. Many a poor man speaks harshly of his covetous rich neighbour and of his indulgence and hardness of heart, whilst, were he in the same position, he would do the same. He *is* the same in his heart, but has had no opportunity of displaying those vices which flow from wealth. And the faults of the poor are condemned by many a rich man, who, were it not for his comforts, would fall as the poor hath fallen. All our hearts are bad ; and if we are saved from this or that wickedness, let us not glorify ourselves but God ; let us each look back over his life. Has not God kept from us many opportunities of doing evil ? Has He not placed kind prudent friends about us, who have been a restraint, and saved us from much misery ? Has it not been our fortune to live within a circle, fenced off from the sights and sounds which destroy, —where the world's vices are rarely mentioned, never entertained, and where we are in absolute ignorance of their worst forms ?

It is a low motive, indeed, but is not the very opinion of the world providentially of service? When you have been running into temptation, and almost ensnared, has not some inward thought, or outward restraint, or withdrawal of the opportunity, turned you from evil? These are not accidents, brethren; God rules them. The religious man beholds God in all of them. He looks through life, and beholds God's hand guiding, God's hand preventing, God's hand turning things aside, God's hand delivering. His being born under a Christian roof, instead of in a heathen cell, though in a Christian land; his being brought to Church early, and made a member of CHRIST, instead of being left to the will of Satan; his being taught the LORD'S Prayer and the articles of his faith, instead of swearing and blaspheming with his first accents; his being taught to fight against, to pray against and overcome, instead of cultivating and eagerly following the devil's earliest temptations, these he regards, and truly regards, as the doing of God, for CHRIST'S sake. And if in any single circumstance of his after life he has been diverted from temptation, or not exposed to it, whom

has he to thank but CHRIST his SAVIOUR, "Who suffereth him not to be tempted above what he is able," Who "leadeth him not into temptation?" This is set forth in the case of David. When blinded by passion, he was hurrying on with two hundred men to shed the blood of Nabal, he was stayed in his path by the persuasions of a third person; and when he came to himself, and considered from what a crime he had been saved, what was his language?—"Blessed be the LORD God of Israel Which sent thee to meet me this day; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from revenging myself with mine own hand." Here, we see, he thanks God for stopping him before he had committed the sin, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel Which *sent* thee to meet me this day."

2. So far I have spoken of the temptations which we escape, by not being exposed to them; but is this always the case? very far from it: we are oftentimes tempted, but CHRIST is ever ready to deliver us.

For many are the instances in holy Scripture of persons, who, though tempted se-

verely, have yet through the power of God been firm. He has heard their prayer, "lead us not into temptation." He has not kept them *out* of temptation, but, when they were in it, He has given them such inward strength, that the devil's fiery dart fell back without harming them. Who hath not heard of Noah in the time of the flood, tempted by ridicule to disbelieve God, tempted by custom to do as the world did? He was not, however, to be moved, but went on with his work. What Christian man has not read of Joseph, pure amidst the perils of Egypt, and calm under reproach? Who does not remember David, tempted again and again to stretch out his hand and take the sceptre, which seemed placed within his reach? Now in every case tempting objects were placed before these persons; objects attractive and powerful over the human heart. They had all the opportunity and the means, for committing the sin to which they were allured, and yet were they not in the least tainted or prevailed upon; these temptations had no effect; they dimmed not the bright mirror of their minds; they turned from them coldly, as something with which

they had no sympathy whatever, Blessed souls! But this shows that our Almighty SAVIOUR hears the prayers of His people, not only by keeping them out of temptation, but by giving them grace and power when tempted, by supporting them under it, and bringing them victorious out of it. It shows that to us, He will make a way of escape. It shows, my brethren, that *you* must not plead weakness or corruption, or Satan's power, because there is One mighty to save, Who can give strength, and repair your corruption, and drive back Satan whence he came. To many temptations you are not exposed at all; for that, be thankful; by many you are tried, temptations peculiar to your station in life, or your personal weakness, but from those you may be delivered; you need not be stained by them: only be diligent, and sincere, when ye pray: "lead us not into temptation."

3. And yet, were I to stop here, I should give a very imperfect notion of the mercy of CHRIST. Of His goodness some are altogether shielded from temptation, of His grace others overcome. But there *are* who fall. There are men and women His professed fol-

lowers, His baptized people, His sworn soldiers, who fall grievously and yet recover. In some one step or other of their downward course, before they are irretrievably lost, the warning voice, the warning Spirit, the strong hand, snatches them from the burning, and though scorched and blackened by the flame they are saved.

In order that you may be able to understand this more particularly, let me remind you of what S. James tells us, that there are various steps or gradations in temptation. Not all at once does a man become the slave of sin, not at once is he led to the commission of crime. In this miserable journey, there is a beginning and there is an end. What is the beginning of temptation? When the thought of wrong first enters your mind, then are you tempted, then are you on the first step to evil. You are sitting alone in your room, and there comes across your mind the representation of sinful pleasure. The thought may be suggested by something you are reading, or something you have heard, or something you behold, or it may come upon your heart, you know not how, a fiery dart, flung by the evil spirit. That is the

beginning of temptation, now you are being tempted, you have not yet committed sin, for sin is to yield, to indulge, to give entertainment, and a home to that thought; but you are being tempted to commit sin, and you are in great danger of sinning.

2. What is the next step in temptation? When you give a harbour to ill thoughts, when you dwell on them and cherish them, when instead of casting them from you, you give a welcome to them, and are pleased with them, when you allow your imagination to wander at will among these wrong suggestions, and are too often lost in the contemplation and delight of them. Then you are like Eve as she stood by the tree of Paradise, before she had yet gathered the fruit, for it was, she thought, a tree to be desired, and as she contemplated it the more, she thought it more desirable. And this is the stage marked by S. James, when he speaks of a man as not only "drawn away" in a measure, but as being "enticed;" not only as being solicited but as beginning mentally at least to give way and yield. Sin has not indeed, as yet, blessed be God, accomplished its full purpose. You may be able, by taking refuge in

CHRIST, to stop the temptation here, that 'it go no further : but you are in great danger, and unless you spurn those thoughts from your soul, you will take the next step, which is more dangerous.

3. That next step, what is it, and when taken? It is this : the temptation has already fastened on your mind and thoughts. It has got possession of your imagination and your fancy ; O cast it out before it prevails, for next, unhappy man, it will seize on your will and purpose. You now have resolved to commit sin, you begin to plot and contrive, and to lay plans, and see in what manner you can accomplish the wicked deed. You now set about it, you make your arrangements, as Judas set about entrapping his Master ; you now meditate upon the hour and the moment, the when and the where. Take heed ! thy bitterest foe plots thy destruction. What does S. James call this step ? he calls it "the conceiving sin."

4. But if you stop not, then follows the next evil step, and you perpetrate the sin. Alas, you have crucified the LORD JESUS ; you have disobeyed God ; you have grieved and perhaps driven away, the HOLY GHOST ;

you have injured yourself, and it may be another ; you have fallen, who will raise you up again ?

5. Yet, even yet CHRIST will raise you up if you do not complete the last, the final step in temptation ; for there is a step even beyond, and that is, the continuing in sin. This step has been taken when sin can be said “to have dominion over you”—when it is your lord and your master—when it is your habit and practice, and sin “reigns” in your mortal bodies. You are arrived at this dreadful condition when temptation can turn and lead you where it pleases ; when, like an enchained indolent slave, sometimes with and sometimes against your will, you follow its biddings. This is what S. James calls the finishing of sin — the sin which brings forth eternal death. Observe, it is the frequency, the continuance, and oft repetition of sin, which properly finishes, completes, and brings the power of temptation to its full triumph and victory ; for this causes sin to be entirely wrought, as it were, into a man's nature. This, in fact, changes his nature, and gradually fits him for the fearful place where he must dwell. Consider, when to any man sin

is thus become a habit, and part of his daily life—when he is little else but the passive instrument of the devil, to work all uncleanness with greediness—when he cannot be said so much to act as to be acted upon, and to be driven powerlessly to and fro by the gusts of passion; then has temptation prevailed to the utmost, then is the sin finished which bringeth forth death.

These are the several degrees by which a temptation grows and prevails upon the hearts of men; and, as I said, happy is it for us that temptation is not at once *finished*—that it does not at once become mature and bring forth death. Happy that there are so many degrees, so many steps, at any of which CHRIST in His mercy may, and constantly does, stretch forth his hand and pluck us like a brand from the burning. Upon this ladder of temptation where, my brethren, do you stand? Each one consider for himself. Not one, I should hope, of this congregation is on the lowest of all. Not one, I would earnestly hope, is such an habitual sinner—is so its slave and captive—as to be turned about whenever temptation comes, as a horse is by its master; not that I would bid even such

an one despair: yet it is a hard and fearful case, and one about which we can only pray and hope. But upon the next step what thousands stand: people who commit single sins, but are not become habitual sinners. Yet, brethren, you must rise or fall—you must go higher or lower—you cannot stay where you are. You must be rescued from the practice of sin altogether, or it will become habitual. You are in fearful danger. A step above these, if it be a step, stand those members of society who in their *will* are sinners; but the want of opportunity, or their station in life, or the world's restraint, prevents them from putting their will into practice; but remove these restraints, and they fall to the level of those below them. Now suppose that you, upon inquiry, should find yourselves to be standing at any one point of this ladder: your work is before you, to be delivered from it. Be earnest with your SAVIOUR, and He will prevent your falling lower; He will get you out of your temptation, whether you be only at the first step, or the second, or the third; and He constantly does this for His people; only remember that any one of these remained in

complacently, and without any endeavour to escape, is as ruinous as the whole.

Therefore, let the man who has just begun to meditate sin, start back as from a spectre, and entreat JESUS CHRIST for deliverance. Let him who has indulged himself in single sins, be in fear lest they become habitual, and be still more earnest with CHRIST for deliverance. And if there be an habitual sinner, let him not despair ; let him remember that he was once taken into God's family ; that " the gifts and calling of God are without repentance ;" that " He willeth not the death of a sinner ;" that angels rejoice over the penitent ; that the checks which he hath met with in arriving at his present degraded condition, are the proofs of God's love and unwillingness that he should die ; and that even now, if God behold him, " against hope believing in hope," and endeavouring with however feeble an effort to regain the path of obedience, He will most certainly be merciful, and make a way to escape from the wrath of hell.

SERMON V.

THE EVIL WORLD.

GALATIANS I. 4.

“WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS, THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER US FROM THE PRESENT EVIL WORLD, ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD AND OUR FATHER.”

WE are here reminded of the sufferings of CHRIST, and of the purpose for which He suffered: “Who gave Himself for our sins.” He died of His own will and pleasure, and hence has so great a claim on our gratitude, as He says, “No man taketh my life from Me, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” The virtue and merit of an action depend in great measure on its being voluntary. If a man be unwilling and compelled, though we may indeed be advantaged, yet we owe the doer

nothing ; it was not his own deed, because his will and inclination went not along with it. But the LORD JESUS, God's only beloved SON, though removed far away from us, and exalted in comparison, as the heavens are above the earth, died for us freely. "He gave Himself for our sins." It is true, the FATHER gave Him likewise, as it is said in the latter part of our text, "according to the will of God and our FATHER." And as it is often repeated, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us and gave His SON to be the propitiation for our sins." But the truth is, the purposes and actions of the Holy Trinity are inseparable. What the FATHER purposeth, the SON also purposeth, and the HOLY GHOST purposeth. What the FATHER doth, the SON also doth, and the HOLY GHOST doth. The work of the Trinity, says S. Augustine, is "understood to be inseparable : so that when the work of the FATHER is spoken of, it is understood that He does not exercise it without the SON, and the HOLY GHOST ; and when the work of the SON is spoken of, it is not without the FATHER and the HOLY SPIRIT ; and when the work of the HOLY SPIRIT is spoken of, it is

not without the FATHER and SON." God the FATHER then gave the SON, and God the SON gave Himself—gave Himself freely and voluntarily for us: gave Himself though so mighty, the Creator, the Immortal, the Invisible. This is His claim upon us, that freely He left heaven—that freely He left the worship of angels—that freely He put on the garb of a man, of a poor and despised man—that freely, so intense was His love, He the eternal God, submitted to contumely and crucifixion: these are the many proofs of His love, and the reasons why we should love Him in return.

This however is not the point upon which I propose to dwell at this moment, but rather on the other part of our text, and the object for which our SAVIOUR came among us. He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from the present evil world. In what sense is the present world evil, and how are we delivered from it?

1. Shall I startle you if I begin by saying that the world is not evil? that is, if you understand by the world, the earth on which we live: good it came at the beginning from the hands of its Creator, and good it remains.

The heavens above us, the sun, and the moon, and the stars, which light us continually and bless us by their influence ; the earth and the waters, and the things that are therein ; the birds, and the beasts, and the fish, and the various productions, by which we enjoy life, which we pray and labour for, these are not evil. It would be a sin to say that they are—they may be abused, and made the cause of evil ; but in themselves they are the good gifts of the ALMIGHTY for our existence and happiness here, and come not into the reckoning of the Apostle, when he speaks of the “ evil world.”

Again, if we consider the kindly relationships which exist in the world, and the great happiness that is possible, by God’s permission, to brothers or sisters, to parents or children, and how the home in which they have spent their lives, through the practice of their unselfishness, may become a comparative heaven. If we consider how in this world by the hand of some angel Minister, the widow’s heart may be made to leap for joy ; and how it is possible for the wealthy to throw light and gladness on the dwellings of sorrow ; if we reflect on the saintly part

of the world, on the holy and good men who have lived and died in it; on Martyrs, Confessors, Apostles, on holy Bishops and devout Virgins—on the amount of true religion and holiness, which even now keeps it from perishing; we must confess that when the world is called evil, it is not altogether, and absolutely, but in a peculiar and modified sense that it is so.

What then is the sense, brethren? It is evil men who make an evil world. As far as the world itself is concerned, it is good; as far as the saints and righteous are concerned, it is good; but evil men, wherever they are, make it evil, and sin changes it to a wilderness. Sin, bad habits, blasphemous words, vicious lives, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; these are the evil parts of the world, these taint and destroy its beauty.

This may be shown by a few instances from Scripture, and a few from common observation.

1. Every one knows that this is true of our earth at the beginning, and of that faultless garden which God made. “Out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every

tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden." Thus is that place described in which our first parents had their dwelling, and here God placed them innocent and pure, the recent work of His own hands, without a spot upon their soul; His own Spirit within them, and without them, all that a bountiful FATHER, all that a loving God, all that troops of waiting angels their appointed servants, could lavish on his favourite creatures. "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." And what changed the features of that fair landscape in which they were placed? What made their God indignant? What drove His Spirit from their hearts? What made every flower worthless, and the fruit on every tree bitter? Was the Garden itself evil? Were they created evil? Alas! was it not their own disobedience, which brought sin into the world, and thus constituted it evil? "She took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat;" this was that which made the world evil—sin.

Again, in what sense was the world evil at the time of the flood? was it not because the mass of mankind was evil? The mute earth itself sinned not against God. The fishes of the deep, the beasts of the field, the stars and the lights of Heaven never disobeyed Him. Nay, He had one faithful servant, the preacher of righteousness, Noah and his family, who because he was not evil, found grace in the eyes of the LORD. But the evil was predominant, and therefore He said to Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before Me: for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold I will destroy them with the earth. Therefore He opened upon them the windows of heaven, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up; therefore the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven were covered; therefore all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man." You see again what made this evil, what caused this desolation. It was the evil men on the earth, it was their vices, blasphem-

mies, impurities, and irreligion, which made the earth solitary, and brought on their race destruction.

But as, after the subsidence of the waters, the green grass reappeared, and gradually covered the soil with a luxurious vegetation, so again by degrees did man overspread the earth, and towns were built, and populous villages. And now we read of Abraham, the father of the faithful, who, at God's bidding, left his country, not knowing where he should set his foot,—who believed God's bare word that he should have a son in his old age,—who, when that son was given, his only one, at the word of the same God offered him in sacrifice. We read of his descendants, Isaac and Jacob ; of the pious and dutiful Joseph ; of Moses, the giver of the law ; of Aaron, the exalted Priest ; of Joshua, and a thousand others,—who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Thus, then, again, the earth was not absolutely evil, there was some good in it ; but there was also very much, a too disproportionate measure, of evil. Once more evil men multiplied upon it, and evil thoughts were commonly

indulged, and evil deeds commonly practised ; and they made the world to that extent evil, and brought down additional evils in the way of punishment. For fearful was the calamity of Sodom, when fire fell from Heaven and destroyed the inhabitants. Fearful was the destruction at the Red Sea, when the depths covered the Egyptians, and they sank into the bottom like a stone. Fearful the sight of the Israelites, dying in hundreds, struck with the plague, or bitten by serpents. Fearful it is to think of the nations of Canaan, put relentlessly to the sword. And fearful, lastly, to reflect on the miseries which fell on their conquerors,—when Jerusalem, the queen of the whole earth, the city of the LORD, was razed to her foundations, and her people were carried captive. O, these, you will say, were great and heart-rending miseries. It is an evil world : true ; but these were the consequences of sin. That is the real evil which involves the others, which necessitates their coming,—the poison which thus deals about it plague and death.

And now, from past history and the records of the Bible, let us turn to what occurs before our eyes. What is it that constitutes

the evil of the world? the sin of individuals. Vice and wickedness, bad principles and thoughts, manifested in deeds, make the world evil. Let us take a single family. There is nothing in the supposed case which necessarily should make its members miserable. I mean, when born into the world they are endowed with fortune; they have health bestowed upon them; they have had their understandings improved, their heads instructed; they have been made the children of God Almighty, and what is to prevent their happiness? A single unsubdued temper will do it—a temper uncontrolled by religion, unsoftened by the Spirit, unchastened by self-denial—a temper which is selfish, and exacting, and obstinate and fretful—a temper which demands every attention, which envies another's pleasure, which sees everything to be wrong; in short, sinfulness, or the corrupt nature, or the old Adam, developing itself in this way, will produce unpleasantness, where there should be peace. And this not because the world, or this family as a specimen of it, is absolute wretchedness, but because the admixture of corruption makes the wretchedness and produces the evil.

Or we will take from the same family another member, the head and chief of it,—the father, who should have cared for his wife and protected his children. We will suppose that he also—alas! a too common case—is a selfish being, that he has fallen into extravagance, has his own views and objects, his own pursuits and passions to indulge, and that he follows them without any reflection on the road to ruin. What miseries and deep penury, what years of unexpected anxiety and want, do such men, all over the world, entail on their families; and yet they were innocent—innocent of this which has fallen on their heads; neither did the world cause it—the world was not to blame—the world heeded him not, and would have willingly left him in the supreme enjoyment of his prosperity. He himself hath caused the evil—his own sin cherished, indulged, carried out into practice, has become ungovernable and rampant, dismantled his father's halls, and extinguished an honourable name.

And if we follow this same individual from the discredit and ruin brought on his family to his own private history, what is the result?

—what the end and upshot of the course chosen by himself?—a diseased body, a lost soul, weakness, want of health, incapacity for enjoyment, and the tremulous feebleness of age before he is old; and when he dies, the hopeless future—the sky without a star, and without a sun; and all not a case of necessity, not compelled; not the world's fault, but his own. If the world to him hath been an evil one, he hath made it so—sensuality and vice will always make it so.

Let us turn for one moment from the supposed case of a single family, and contemplate the world at large. Are not those general miseries which overrun mankind too frequently attributable to sin? Is it not the vice of covetousness, called in Holy Writ idolatry, the love of money which some coveting after have “pierced themselves through with many sorrows,” which in a commercial country, and in an age when men enter into unwarrantable and vast speculations, in order that they may embark on enterprises and schemes still greater, and accumulate wealth—that golden image to which we all bow down—is it not this untiring pursuit of money, that is, unless Scripture be

untrue, this *sin*, which produces every now and then, those panics, and that universal distress, which overwhelm a nation, and affect the hearthstone of every family? Or when vice overspreads a people, and our lower appetites have power, and wickedness, and crime, and sensuality, and sedition, and rebellion against governors are prevalent,—is not this very commonly the fruit and progeny of previously existing evil? Is it not because evil writers, and evil talkers, have propagated their poison till it has leavened the lump, which is now thus breaking out into wounds and bruises and putrefying sores?

Now what has been said will be sufficient to show you what I have been aiming at, that the evil of the world is sin—that sin alone makes it to be evil, and therefore sin is that from which our blessed SAVIOUR came to deliver us; as He says in that divine prayer about His disciples, “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest deliver them from the evil.” We are to stay in the world, at least for a time; our trial is in the world; the prayer then of our blessed LORD is not that

we may be taken out of the world itself, but delivered from the evil of it.

And how does He accomplish this deliverance? The first step is to take us into His Church ; and in the very deed and moment of doing so, to remove all impediments to our walking freely. You know when our LORD raised Lazarus from the dead, His first command to His disciples was "Loose him and let him go." He was to walk again at liberty upon the earth, but he was hampered and confined by the grave-clothes which wrapped him round ; and, therefore, our LORD said, "Loose him, and let him go." Every man is hampered and confined,—every child born into the world,—by the tight cords of original sin. This is a load upon him, the weight and guilt of it, not contracted by himself, which he brings into the world ; and this God, in consideration of the Cross of CHRIST, begins by removing. We have to run a long course—we have to fight a hard fight ; but if we are to begin from the very first with a heavy intolerable load upon us, and our limbs are to be restricted, and our efforts weighed down by the curse under which we come into

the world, and the guilt we inherit from our parents, then who would not abandon the contest in despair, and refuse to strive so greatly at disadvantage? But CHRIST, as a very first step, removes this impediment to our success, as all who are present have learned. He has appointed Baptism for this purpose. Hence it is said in the Creed, "I believe in one Baptism for the remission of sins:" hence in Scripture, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins:" and hence in the Prayer Book, "We call upon Thee for this infant, that he may receive the remission of his sins."

But in order that we may be delivered from the evil world, and not be seduced into the evil of it, as others are, it is necessary not only that our birth guiltiness should be washed away, but that in growing up we should know how to escape from what is wrong, and to choose the right. It is necessary that the heavenly Physician, having broken the violence of the disease,—nay, having in a measure removed it quite away,—should provide us with cautions and a regimen how to walk, that we relapse not irrecoverably, and our last condition be worse than the first.

As a next step, then, no sooner do we grow up, than the Holy Scriptures are placed before us. There we have our cautions ; there our advice ; there our rules. No man ever took that for his guide and failed in being delivered from the evil of the world. Its rules are sure, its precepts infallible,—for they are written by Him Who is infallible, the Eternal God. Men do not—we none of us, unfortunately, *do*—walk by those directions ; we have all of us our subtle excuses for evading the medicine which is bitter. But walk by the teaching of your God, and you will not contribute to the world's wickedness, nor will you be the victim of its temptations.

Nor yet have we only the outward precept, the advice and warnings of CHRIST's Ministers, and the inspired volume, but we have also the inward power of the HOLY GHOST ; which is the third step taken by JESUS CHRIST for delivering us from the world's wickedness. This, as you know, under the Gospel, is our chief and principal heritage: this chiefly distinguishes and gives a superiority to the Christian Church over the Jewish, namely, the established and permanent abiding of the HOLY GHOST in the midst of us ; in the Catholic

Church at large, and in the individual members of the same, to be their deliverance from the evil world. For now, not only are impediments removed—not only are directions placed before us; but we have also a new strength poured into our souls; we are recovered, revived, refreshed; we have God in our hearts, and what can prevail against Him? Certainly the evils of the world, that is, its temptations to sin, are terrible. Every hour and every moment thousands of mankind are swept away in their whirling flood; and vain were it for us to contend had we not that of which I have spoken—the sword of the Spirit, and might we not take to ourselves the whole armour of God on the right hand and on the left; but with this heavenly defence—with the new strength given us—with angels looking on, with CHRIST to encourage us, with the FATHER our fast Friend, we shall be surely more than conquerors. “For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.”

And when, my brethren, we have some-

time dwelt upon its surface, and taken our part in its sorrows or joys, and have been variously tried by its anxieties and seductions, and have been delivered from its evils by overcoming them ;—when we have fought the good fight, and finished our course successfully, through the grace of God—then will the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in a more complete and perfect sense, deliver us from the present evil world, by taking us to Heaven. Then evil in every shape will have for us no further existence, because the former things are passed away ;—“ then there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” As we ascend towards the Heavens, and this small spot of earth dwindles to the sight, so will all its griefs vanish from memory, or only return to make that happiness we are enjoying more excessive ; and there we shall see, in place of the evils about us, nothing but good—nothing but purity and holiness, nothing but brightness and light. God and His angels, holy men and women without blemish, thousands clothed in white as emblems of their sinlessness, and having on their heads crowns, as emblematic of victory ;—

these are the sights we shall behold for the present vicious, troubled scene. O let us prepare for them ! God Almighty teach us to prepare for them !—Blissful land of our future inheritance, how should we have it in our thoughts ! Saintly company, to be, as we hope, our companions through eternity, how should we endeavour to resemble them ! Let us only use the means in our power—the means which CHRIST hath given for escaping the pollutions of the world,—and we shall be treading in their footsteps, and walk by their side.

SERMON VI.

THE EVIL TONGUE.

S. JAMES III. 11.

“DOTH A FOUNTAIN SEND FORTH AT THE SAME PLACE SWEET WATER AND BITTER? CAN A FIG TREE, MY BRETHREN, BEAR OLIVE BERRIES, EITHER A VINE FIGS? SO CAN NO FOUNTAIN YIELD BOTH SALT WATER AND FRESH.”

S. JAMES here reminds all Christians of the condition in which they had been placed by the mercy of Almighty God. He is speaking to persons who with himself were partakers of the common salvation, brought into the world by our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, for He calls them “brethren.” “My brethren, can a fig tree bear olive berries, either a vine figs?” Doth not each bear

fruit after its own nature? Can a Christian then bear unchristian fruits? Can he who is spiritual, bear unholy works? My brethren, he says, these things ought not to be.

You will observe, he doth not say, this *cannot* be. He doth not say, the members of JESUS CHRIST never sin, never go backward, never act unworthily—quite otherwise. He is here writing to the *members* of CHRIST, and he says that some of them walked sinfully: nay, he says of Christians generally, “in *many* things we offend *all*,” and of those to whom he wrote in particular; “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing;” and he does not argue from this—therefore you never had any interest in CHRIST: but having an interest in CHRIST, you walk very ungratefully, very sadly. He reproaches them, as we might a son who had sinned against his father. “My brethren, these things ought not so to be.”

S. Paul is ever throwing out similar reproaches, against inconsistent Christians; for his Epistles are written to the Christian Church; they were written to those who had already been baptized into JESUS CHRIST, and were made members of His body; and

in them continually, he bids the good and faithful Christian, "be constant, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD," whilst he reproaches the inconsistent for going backwards. He tells them *all, good and bad*, that they had been elected to a high position, that they had been placed in God's family ; not of works, but of grace ; that they had been brought out of the world into the kingdom of God's dear SON : and over those whom he saw walking worthy of their vocation, as the children of God, and heirs of glory, he rejoiced with exceeding joy ; whilst to the others he spake on this wise, "Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh ?" And, "know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy : for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." And, "what will ye, shall I come unto you with a rod ?" Again, "Ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed, might be taken away from among you."

Here, then, we see that there are two classes of persons in the Church ; those who

walk worthily of their Christian calling, and those who walk otherwise ; just as there may be two sorts of sons in a family—both sons—both endowed with similar privileges, yet walking very differently. And I would remind those who complain of this state of things in the Christian Church, and devise means of their own for altering it ; that it is our LORD's own description of the Church, and therefore it is with His permission and knowledge to the end of time. “The kingdom of heaven,” He says, “is like a net cast into the sea, which gathered of *every kind*, and at the end of the world the angels shall come and sever the wicked from among the just.”

But what I would particularly insist upon now is, that all through the Epistles, which were written after Christianity was established, Christians, bad and good, are continually reminded of the gifts which God had bestowed on them in CHRIST, and especially the gift of the Spirit. S. Paul presses it upon them as a reason, why it was a dreadful thing for them to sin. “Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the HOLY GHOST, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” And he continually beseeches

them, “quench not the Spirit,”—“resist not the Spirit,” and “if ye live in the Spirit,” (a thing not disputed) if ye live in a spiritual kingdom, with the HOLY SPIRIT in the midst of you, “walk after the Spirit.” There seems to have been only one conceivable case, in which he who had been baptized into the body of CHRIST, could be without the Spirit, that is, when after fruitless efforts, the HOLY SPIRIT had left him for ever. “Know ye not that JESUS CHRIST is in you, except ye be *reprobates* ?” This seems the alone exception ; *If*, indeed, which we will not suppose, the LORD JESUS hath utterly cast you off, and you are sentenced to hell, and lost irretrievably ; then the Spirit of CHRIST may have deserted you ; but short of this, even with unfaithful Christians the Spirit of their LORD strives, the long suffering of their SAVIOUR calls them to repentance.

I will take it for granted then, my brethren, that the Spirit of God is striving in the hearts of every one of us ; indeed if He be not, it is vain for me to preach and for you to hear, since without Him we can do nothing. On the other hand, through CHRIST strength-

ening us, we can do all things. I know not indeed what comfort, or encouragement we can give to the fallen Christian, unless it be this, that the Spirit of CHRIST is with him to raise him up; Of what use to bid him pray, for he cannot pray without the Spirit; "We know not what to pray for as we ought: the Spirit helpeth our infirmities;"—Of what use to bid him repent; since CHRIST by His Spirit alone "giveth repentance;"—Of what use to bid him call on GOD the FATHER; seeing that by the "Spirit in our hearts alone, we call Abba, FATHER;"—Of what use to tell him that CHRIST hath said, "Come unto Me, ye that are weary," seeing that CHRIST will only look upon His own, and if a man have not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of His.

And I might add another reason why I feel persuaded that the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD strives with every one present. GOD is not unjust: He exacts from us according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. Whom does He ask to give largely to the poor? Not the poor, but the *rich*. He who *has* money must bestow money upon CHRIST's poor members: and so He brings you into His Church, and thereupon gives

you the power of receiving its truths and walking in its precepts. He never says, "*believe this*," without giving you the power of believing ; He never says "*do this*," without giving the power of doing it. Would He punish the blind man for not seeing, the deaf man for not hearing, the foolish man for not understanding, the paralytic for not walking,—this would be *unjust* : and therefore when He tells you to believe things, to walk in a certain way, and to be conformed to JESUS CHRIST, seeing you can do none of these things without the Spirit, His *commanding* the things implies the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT to perform them.

But now, my brethren, to what end has the LORD JESUS CHRIST given to us, the members of His Church, this power ? It is written, "that He might purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;" and again, "that He might purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ;" and again, that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." He bestows the HOLY SPIRIT upon every one of us, that what we cannot do naturally, we

may do through Divine help, so as to be a peculiar people, lights in the world, salt in the earth, zealous of good works, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world, and that because “we walk after the Spirit,” and “have purified our souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.”

And therefore, since our Redeemer has thus purified the fountain of our hearts, by infusing His HOLY SPIRIT, and fulfilling His promise,—“He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: but this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive,”—seeing that JESUS CHRIST, of His grace, hath healed the waters, and caused them to well forth more healthfully and freshly, it is well asked when we send forth only the turbid waves of sin, Doth a fountain send forth at the same place both sweet water and bitter? From a pure spring, limpid water should flow: from the heart which the Spirit of God has touched there should appear the fruits of the Spirit; there should flow love, and joy, and peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

meekness, temperance. But as to the contrary, the works of the flesh: "My brethren," says S. James, "these things ought not to be." As in another passage, "What concord is there between CHRIST and Belial?" and here "no fountain can yield both salt water and fresh." So much in general: because as it regards one of these fruits mentioned in the second lesson for this evening, and which the HOLY GHOST is given us to stifle; I mean, the ungoverned use of the tongue, it may seem to some almost too light a thing to mention: But this cannot be the case. For S. James devotes a whole chapter to it of a short Epistle, and he could not therefore think it light and trivial. Then he says, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity;" and he would scarcely use this language for nothing. And again, our blessed LORD hath said, that "of every idle word a man shall give an account at the judgment."

For, as I have said, unseemly language is but the fruit of an evil seed—the bitter water, as S. James says, of an embittered fountain: and this is the reason why it is so dreadful, and a Christian shudders at oaths, (we will say,) and imprecations. The

man who uses an oath or a curse to his neighbour, will comfort himself by saying, I only use a rough word now and then, forgetting that those words are the outward exhibition of an abiding habit within. For this reason our LORD imputes so much sin to wrathful feelings. This unholy state of heart shows itself in many different ways according to circumstances. One man is profane, another is blasphemous, another is an unclean person, another covetous, another a drunkard, another a swearer; but as one and the selfsame Spirit produces the various fruits of holiness, so are all these in different degrees but the manifold exhibition of one cause—an embittered heart.

And thus, to follow out the Apostle's figure, unwholesome waters, as they flow from field to field, throw not up everywhere the same weeds, yet they throw up weeds of one sort or another, showing their poisonous quality by their fruits.

Now S. James, in the chapter before us, uses three special arguments to restrain Christians from the unruly use of the tongue: one I have already hinted at—the *inconsistency* of the thing—that the heart touched

by the HOLY SPIRIT should do the works of the flesh—that the fountain which hath been purified should again flow with bitter waters and the servants of CHRIST should serve Belial. This is very inconsistent. We have devoted ourselves to the LORD CHRIST ; His praise should be continually in our mouth ; prayer should be our accustomed language. We have promised to study the strains of angels, and become familiar with and adopt them as our own ; so that instead of being now a Babel of confusion, the Church may utter but one language in the presence of the Lamb ; and how very inconsistent that from such lips cursing should proceed—how very inconsistent if any of you who have been now repeating David's psalms, the notes of heaven, should to-morrow be found uttering an oath, or even using a passionate expression. “ Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing ; my brethren, these things ought not to be.” Thus the Apostle exposes the inconsistency of it, or rather thus he *adds* to the inconsistency. It is bad enough for one who only professes Christianity to use the language of the devil, but it is a greater inconsistency when out of the same mouth

proceeds blessing and cursing—when you, the same person bless God, yet curse His image. Let the wicked do it; the heathen who is without God, and without CHRIST, if it must be. “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” But a Christian man—a man who has been baptized into the Holy Trinity; a man who reads the Bible, and comes into God’s house and worships there; a man who joins himself to the company of the saints, dead and living, and takes into his mouth the same words, the same prayers, the same Scripture passages with them;—nay, the man who perhaps approaches the awful mystery of the Body and Blood of his LORD;—that from such a mouth should proceed the gibes and imprecations of lost spirits, is it not shockingly inconsistent? Doth a fountain send forth at the same place both sweet water and bitter?

But besides the inconsistency of an unruly tongue in Christians, S. James reminds us of the consequences both to others and ourselves. “Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth, and the tongue is a fire.” How far may a single spark dropped among stubble reach!

How does it steal along the floor, creep up the wall, envelope the roof, spread from house to house, and seize churches and noble buildings, till it wrap a whole city in conflagration. So does a single word dropped unadvisedly. If a soft answer turneth away wrath, on the other hand "grievous words stir up anger." If you reply quietly to a provocation, or refuse to answer, the quarrel dies; but one word draws on another, and wrath kindleth wrath; and that is made eternal which might have been extinguished if only one had been a *Christian*. Thus it comes to pass that the closest relations are often the worst enemies; and those whom God intended to be near, are furthest apart in heart and feeling; and brothers and sisters, parents and children are separated, and look coldly on one another, and will not talk or have any intercourse,—and all for a word. You see, then, how great a matter a little fire kindleth. Is it surprising "if of every idle word we shall give an account at the Judgment?"

But again, you say something injurious of your neighbour. There is a little truth in it, but much more falsehood. It has been

added to, and enlarged, and swollen into a crime. But *you* repeat it. The story spreads. It is told everywhere, and though it wounds your neighbour to death, and from the calumny he loses all acquaintances and friends, yet you cannot *recall it now*. See “how great a matter a little fire kindleth.”

Again, you utter impure words before a child, the child treasures them up all through his life; though he lives sixty or seventy years, unhappy being, his thoughts and language take their complexion from your words; but besides, to how many has he communicated what he first heard from you. Mark again, “how great a matter a little fire kindleth;” it is a solemn thought, that the foul words you uttered in that child’s hearing, the first spot on his cleansed soul, rested not there, but like an evil angel, unrestrained and at large, will be winging its onward flight when you are in your grave, wandering to and fro upon the earth, tainting, corrupting, ruining spirit after spirit, till CHRIST come to the judgment. Surely the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, and setteth on fire *the course of nature*.

To conclude, if we will not restrain our

members by the aid of God's Spirit, and especially that member which S. Peter calls "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison;" if we will not, though we may do so, deny ourselves a little, and beat down the temptation, and call in God to our aid, and conform ourselves to the pattern of CHRIST, Who bowed Himself before the smiters and never answered a word; if instead of this, and in spite of the inconsistency of the thing in those who are Christians, and the far reaching consequences to remote generations; we will, in the indulgence of a wilful spirit, scatter fire-brands about, unkind, malicious, polluting, or injurious words, wide-spread as the evil may be, will it stop short with others? No: it will return upon ourselves; which "setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell." The fire which hath gone forth spreading and consuming, at the judgment hour is stopped in its course, and rolling back again is concentrated on the tongue which gave it existence. You who uttered the word, which has done such mischief to thousands, and ruined so many souls, now feel its burning effects in your own person. Ought not this to make you

careful of your words, those winged words, which once launched forth, take a flight you know not whither? May God make you careful, watchful, prayerful; "For if a man offend not in *word*, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body."

SERMON VII.

GOD WORKS BY MEANS.

EPHESIANS III. 10.

“TO THE INTENT THAT NOW UNTO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN HEAVENLY PLACES MIGHT BE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH, THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD.”

THE Church sets apart the second Sunday in Advent for a thankful consideration of Holy Scripture, whilst on the third Sunday she directs us to that other principal instrument, whereby JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR prepares the world for His coming; “the ministry of His Church.” “O LORD JESU CHRIST Who at Thy *first* coming didst send

Thy messenger to prepare Thy way before Thee." And in the Epistle, "Let a man, so account of us," that is, the Apostles and other teachers of the Church, "as of the Ministers of CHRIST, and *stewards* of the mysteries of God." And then the Collect mentions the *end* for which they had been appointed; "To make ready Thy way, that at Thy *second* coming we may be found an acceptable people in Thy sight;" that is, as S. John Baptist prepared the way for CHRIST's *first* coming in the flesh; so the Christian Church exists, and will be continued, to prepare the way for the *second* coming of JESUS CHRIST in glory. As this is the Sunday previous to the Ember Week, it is also another reason why the Church would have you thankfully consider her ministry at this time.

For the present I will suggest to you this one truth; that God *worketh* generally in this world of ours, and upon the human family, by *visible* and *outward means*; that He does not work upon them directly, but through a medium, by some other thing or things, between Himself and them. This is the general habit, and custom of God, and

therefore He saveth souls, not apart from, but by *means* of, or *through*, the ministry of His Church. He hath appointed the Church, "To make ready His way."

I say, God generally worketh by *visible and outward means*. Take the natural world: God useth *parents* for continuing the race of living creatures. Parents are the visible means by which men are born. We all acknowledge that it is God Who creates every man, yet an instance is not known (saving Adam) in which any man is born *without* parents. God then useth parents as the *means* of continuing our race.

Again, when we have been born, and are growing up, how are we supported? We might, had God chosen it, have lived without food. Can we do so? Does not God nourish us invisibly, through that outward and visible means, food! And how *many successive* means does God employ, before the food reaches us? He makes use of the husbandman as His *means* to prepare the ground, and sow the seed; He employs the rain to nourish it; and the *sun* to ripen it; He causes others again to reap it, house, and sell it. He makes it to pass through the hands of him who

grinds and bakes it ; and at length, it comes to us as food.

Again, take our dress, how many hands are employed, how many *means* does God make use of, before we have it, in the form in which we wear it ?

Are you sick ? you send for a physician. Here is the *first means*. But does he heal you with a touch ? He must apply to another means, his *medicines*, and even these come not from God as He administers them. Were they not perhaps in their original elements dug from the earth, or grown in the field ? And so again, through this *chain of means*, we are carried back to God.

Let us take another point ; are our *habits* formed when we are born ? How does God prepare any individual for life's cares and duties ? Holy Scripture tells us, "He hath set over him tutors and governors." He moulds us into what we are, by these *outward means*. Do we expect any one to do well without them ? Is it not a matter of course that you send a boy or girl to school ? Now "God is the giver of all good gifts ;" "if any man lack *wisdom* let him ask of God." It is God *Who educates*, but does He

usually educate without *these means*? Will any man risk the prospects of his child, his professional or mental culture, on the ground, that since *knowledge* comes from God, God will give it *directly*, and therefore what use of Masters and Schools, Hospitals and Colleges, Inns of Court, and Universities? Some may go to this length, but they are foolish persons, and may be sure, that their children will be foolish; for though God hath promised to make us wise, He makes a use of the *means*, and a most diligent use, the *condition*.

Let us turn to Scripture, and see how God has ever brought about His purposes. How did He instruct Abraham in the Gospel? By these means: He made him conduct his son Isaac to Mount Moriah, bearing the wood upon his shoulders, as JESUS CHRIST did His Cross. He made him, as it were sacrifice him upon the altar, teaching CHRIST's death, and He restored him to life again, when as good as dead; teaching, that He would not leave CHRIST's Soul in hell. Thus, by these outward and visible means, "He," as the Apostle writes, "preached before the Gospel unto Abraham."

How did God provide for the preservation of His chosen amidst famine, and for the growth of His Church during four hundred years? By *means* the most unlikely. Through the means of evil-minded brethren He sent Joseph into Egypt, through the means of a wicked mistress He had him put in prison, through the means of a servant He brought him before Pharaoh, through Pharaoh He raised him to be the second man in Egypt, and through the means of power thus attained, He made him able to nourish his family.

How when the time was come did He bring His chosen out of Egypt? It is said, "with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm;" and yet not *directly*, but by *means*. Did He not make Moses the means of leading them out? Did He not make *blood*, sprinkled on their door-posts, the means of preserving them from the Angel? Did He not make the Red Sea the means of destroying the Egyptians, and manna the means of sustaining the Israelites?

And during the forty years in the wilderness, how did God appoint to hold converse with His people? Did He not speak to

them, and forgive them, and confer benefits upon them, first by Moses, and then *only* through the High Priest, the Priests and Levites? Could the people approach Him without them? Did He not command Moses, to make the tabernacle after an exact pattern, and all the children of Israel to bring their riches for it? Did He not descend upon this tabernacle in a cloud, and make it glorious with His Divine Presence, and constitute its ordinances, its daily and other sacrifices, its frequent feasts, its Priests and Ministers, as the perpetual *means* by which the Israelites should draw nigh to Him, and the LORD GOD would draw nigh to them and bless them? He had chosen them to be His people, He would bestow on them benefits, but *through* His Church and Priesthood, which they must apply to, and use reverently and solely, as Korah and Abiram found; this was the *condition* and the means of their being blessed by God.

Not to be too long, I will only add of the times after this, when the temple was built; that whenever the kings, the nobles, and the people, ceased to use its services and ministers, as the means of being in God's favour,

so surely they were sufferers, from rebellion, war, or famine. And again, when they returned and had recourse to their God, through the means appointed, so certainly God's blessing came upon them and they prospered.

Thus we see Almighty God has ever worked with man by outward means or instruments. Did He cease when CHRIST came? We shall see.

He, Almighty God, took *flesh* as the only *means* (as far as we know) by which He Who is a Spirit, could walk visibly among men, could talk with them, could fulfil the law for them, could die for them on the Cross, could be buried, could open the grave and prepare a place for them in heaven.

He, God and man, being about to leave the world, that the truth He brought might not die with Him, instructed twelve Apostles, and communicated through that *means* His message and gifts to mankind. He, having Himself departed, made them the *means* by which He gathered men to Himself. *He*, in heaven, spake *through* them on earth. *He* gave, but *through* them, gifts, pardon, repentance, faith, mercy, to those who joined their

body. He, I say, would bless all mankind, but *by* the Apostles, for *through them* men partook of CHRIST.

And since it was His purpose to go on saving men to the end of the world, and not only those of one generation, as He had raised up the Apostles to succeed Himself, so He raised up others to succeed the Apostles. He, JESUS CHRIST, made an organized Body of living men, in continual succession, the means whereby He admitted into His kingdom, educated in His laws and discipline, pardoned on repentance, bestowed privileges and honours, union with God, and eternal life.

Texts might be multiplied on this point. I mention a few, and they are to prove this, that JESUS CHRIST, having left the earth, proposed to act upon the world for its salvation, through the *means of a Body of men*, compacted into *one visible* society, having rulers over it, and called "the Church." Thus "they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine," (that is in the faith or belief which they taught,) "and fellowship," (that is in the Apostolic society or communion.) Why? as the *means* of continuing in

CHRIST. "There were added to the *Church* daily such as should be saved."* Why? if it was not the *appointed means* of their being saved? So "the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground (or stay) of the truth" why called by these names, except that the Church is the *means* of maintaining truth, the stay of truth amidst error, where only it rests, and where those who seek shall find it! And, that in this body, the Church, there are set rulers and ministers, is plain. Some indeed say there are no ministers, no distinction between those who give, and those who receive the Holy mysteries. This is a great error: Take heed, "to all the flock over which the HOLY GHOST hath made you overseers." This is the *divine institution*; and their office is, "to *feed the Church of God*, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Again, "Ye," altogether, are "the Body of CHRIST, and members in particular." "And,

* Or, "the LORD added daily such as became safe in the Church," that is, which recovered themselves from that danger, in which they were involved, in that wicked generation, and betook themselves to the *Church* as to a *Sanctuary*.—Hammond, Pract. Cat.

God hath set some (not all) in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers." And then he asks, "Are all Apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" which is the strongest way of saying, "you know, as said above, that only *some*, and *not all*, are by divine appointment, Apostles, prophets, and teachers." Again in another passage the doctrine I have been laying down, is very plain, "He gave *some* Apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, *for the work of the ministry*, for the edifying of the Body of CHRIST." He then, God, appointed a ministry of different orders for this very end and purpose, to be the *means* or instruments, of *edifying*, that is building up, the Body or Church of CHRIST. In other words, God, through the *means of a ministry* buildeth up His Church.

Thus we have seen a system of means throughout, and I repeat, God generally worketh by *outward* and *known* means. He wrought on the souls of men of old chiefly by the Jewish, as He does now, by the Christian Church. In the Christian Church He worketh by "the stewards of His mysteries," moving up and down in it and performing

various offices, as still further *means* by which CHRIST edifieth His Body. They admit fresh members into the Body by means of Holy Baptism ; they have to instruct them in the faith as children, and see that they understand it ; they have to bring them to the “laying on of hands,” by which JESUS CHRIST through His “overseers” further strengtheneth His Church ; they have to distribute the Holy mysteries of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, they are to keep carefully the written Word, and explain it to the body in sermons ; they are to join Christians in marriage, because it is a great mystery, and in the mind of God, represents the union between CHRIST and His Church : they are to build up the weak, and comfort the unhappy ; and they are to lay in the grave with prayers for a joyful resurrection. Thus JESUS CHRIST established an Apostolic Church and ministry to prepare His way, and to go before His face until He comes.

This being the case there are one or two conclusions, to which we should come.

1. Seeing it is the means left behind Him by JESUS CHRIST for our salvation, we

should cleave stedfastly to this Church and ministry, to the "Apostles' doctrine and fellowship." Seeing CHRIST hath appointed certain means of approaching Him, we should use those means ; seeing He hath appointed a *particular* means, we should not risk our safety, by doing *without* those means. A child, as we know, may now and then be *self*-taught, and arrive at eminence in a way of his own, yet this is an exception, it is not promised ; and he, who for his own child shall trust to such a chance, will be disappointed.

2. Whilst we betake ourselves to the Church and her ministrations, as God's appointed *instruments* for saving our souls, we of course regard them as *only* instruments or means. We are to look through them to CHRIST ; we get all our *good* through them from CHRIST, not from the Church, or Ministers, or Sacraments, as apart from CHRIST, for then they are dead forms ; but from them as connecting us with CHRIST. It was CHRIST, of course, Who opened the eyes of the blind in the Gospel, and staunched the issue of blood, and yet we must grant,

that CHRIST did the one by means of clay and spittle, and the other through His garment. And so the Christian man is taught, that in being made one with the Church, he is one with CHRIST, he is in the light, he is in the kingdom of heaven; he is of the communion and company of the saints, and a partaker of the Divine nature. He is taught, that incorporation with the Church is the means by which all this is wrought, and that it is CHRIST Who doeth it; for, “by one Spirit are we *all* baptized into one body, and have been *all* made to drink into one Spirit.” And, “ye are *washed*, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the Name of the LORD JESUS and *by the Spirit* of our God.”

3. And this great truth, (that whilst we both use and revere CHRIST's institutions, as the only promised means of communication with Himself, we yet look through them and in them, in His Church, Sacraments and Ministers *for* CHRIST;) this truth enables us to be less slavish, in reality, than those who differ from us. For it is well known that both *extremes*, though on separate grounds, meet on this as on some other points, and make the spiritual life of their people to de-

pend on the character, or intention of the Minister ; and you will hear people saying, “ I cannot receive the Sacrament, from such a man, because he is unworthy.” But now what does unworthiness, or inconsistency, or want of capacity in the Minister matter, if he be only the *means* by which CHRIST bestows *grace* ? We surely have higher faith, who, while we use and *insist* upon the means, *because* CHRIST *hath appointed* them, yet look through them only to CHRIST, and know that He can make the basest vessel convey His Spirit, and be an instrument to our good, and believe that He *will do so*. “ The effect of CHRIST’s ordinance is not taken away, by their wickedness, nor the grace of God’s gifts diminished from such as by faith, and rightly, receive the Sacraments ministered unto them, which be effectual, because of CHRIST’s *institution* and promise, though they be ministered by evil men.”* Thus, to repeat what I have said, we must be members of CHRIST’s Apostolic Church, and pray with His Ministers, and receive at their hands the Sacraments, but we look for grace and glorify

* Art. 26.

in them all, *Him* Who appointed them and is their life, JESUS CHRIST.

4. And we may perhaps trace to the not receiving God's appointments, in a reverent spirit, and looking through them to Him, many of the evils now among us. If a *child* look on his parent, only as a stronger person than himself, having no higher sanction, than that of might, no authority over him from God, he will rebel. If a *subject* think this of governments and kings, he is seditious; and if *Christians* think that churches are but the constitutions of men, and that they may take up this or that at their choice, and erect or pull to pieces as they like, there must be schism to the end. But let a child see God in his parent, saying "Honour thy father and thy mother." Let subjects see that governments "are ordained of God, and that they who resist shall heap to themselves damnation." Let Christians feel, that the Church is of CHRIST; incorporates into CHRIST; that God set in the Church first Apostles, &c.; that CHRIST left it behind Him to be "the pillar and ground of the truth" for all ages, and the means of access to Him, and the instrument by which

He would bless them ; and then, respectively, children and subjects and Christians, will be meek, gentle and dovelike in spirit, of one fellowship and mind, one with each other, and one with CHRIST. .

SERMON VIII.

USE AND ABUSE OF SCRIPTURE.

ROM. xv. 4.

“WHATSOEVER THINGS WERE WRITTEN AFORETIME WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING: THAT WE THROUGH PATIENCE AND COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES, MIGHT HAVE HOPE.”

DAY by day the Christian is required to be looking forward to the coming of JESUS CHRIST. He shall come, it has been declared, the second time in flaming fire, as a thief in the night, so that when men shall say peace and safety, then shall come upon them sudden destruction. He shall be seated on His throne, in the middle heavens, with ten thousand angels about Him, and shall call together earth's inhabitants, and judge men according to their works.

But thanks to the great goodness and mercy of God, He has not merely told us to prepare for His coming and there left it ; giving us over to our own devices, or plans, or preferences ; but He has also given us aids and assistances, which if we use in the manner intended by Him, we may hope to be ready against His coming.

Two of these aids, and two very principal ones, the Church mentions during these weeks of Advent. She invites us to contemplate CHRIST's first coming : she tells us of His second : she bids us be prepared. And then she reminds us of those aids which God hath given us, towards this preparation ; namely, the Holy Scriptures, and the ministry of the Church.

I shall offer you to-day a few remarks on the former of these subjects.

1. First then, What is the value of the Holy Scriptures ? Why are we anxious, each one of us, to have that volume, and why do we read it, for instruction or comfort ? The answer is, that it comes from God : it is God's book. He Who made the heaven and the earth, He Who made the angels and mankind, He Who sustains and

and arbitrates the fate of every being, has given us this volume of the Scriptures. Now surely we ought to prize every known gift of Almighty God, independently of any benefit we may ourselves reap from it. We hear people say on earth, that though such or such a thing be of no great value in itself, yet they value it because it was given: it is a token of esteem, affection, or gratitude, and as such they prize it. And why should the ALMIGHTY give us the sacred volume, but that He loves us? It is a precious gift, because it is the token of His affection. We should value the gifts of a king or queen. How highly should we esteem the gifts of the immortal and invincible!

2. But further, read the book of any mere man whatever, be he the most learned, or industrious, and it is probable, nay likely, that many errors will be found in it: for the most capacious mind is limited, and sees not many things which are necessary to the comprehension of truth; and moreover is corrupted and biassed by the fall. But God is true: everything spoken by Him is truth; "He," says the Apostle, "cannot lie:" and

thereofre the Holy Scriptures are of great price, not only as God's gift, but because everything in them, if we only understand it aright, is truth : and when we are vexed by the casuistry of the world ; when we see people on all sides of us, using their powers, not in seeking after the truth, but in making out their case ; in building up this or that particular system ; in defending this or that popular notion ; when we see how they shut their eyes to, and will not understand, or otherwise evade, whatever is opposed to their opinions ; it is a cause of thankfulness to Almighty God, that there is a book in which the truth is found. Not that every one or even the greatest portion of men will find it. For of many Satan hath blinded their eyes, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine upon them. Prejudices and bitterness, and obstinacy, and unwillingness, are obscuring clouds before the eye of the mind, and forbid our seeing ; but through God's grace, the prepared soul need not be ignorant. To any one who really wishes for truth, who is determined to accept it, and permits not worldliness or prejudice, self-will, or vanity to stand in the way of it, God's

book will furnish it. "Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

3. The Holy Scriptures then are precious, because they are the gift of no less a being, than our Maker and SAVIOUR, and because what they contain is true. But still further they are precious, because of the *sort* of truths, with which they are filled. For to what do they relate? Not to this world only; not to the things which perish, and last only for a time. Quite certain indeed it is that whosoever followeth the book of God will be acting wisely even for the present life; for "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is." "My son forget not My law: but let thine heart keep My commandments. For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee." And yet this is its principal value, that it proclaims to us, and points out the way to the life immortal: for the present life after all is but a small moment in our existence, and make it as joyous as you may, what is it worth, if it be followed by eternal misery? If when we die we are not as the beasts which perish: if this life be not all, but there is another

beyond it, which shall be for ever ; if when ages have rolled away, and the sun and moon have set ; if when the old world hath been destroyed, and a new world hath risen ; if, infinitely beyond that, we are still living, and shall live for ever ; then of how great value is that book which proclaims to us all this, and which traces out for us the steps to happiness ! “ If,” says the ALMIGHTY, “ you would dwell with Me, in a land where there shall be no more sorrow and no more tears ; there are certain things which you must humbly believe, and a certain life which you must invariably lead : these are all written in My book ; there they are recorded ; there you may find them.” Is not that book then most valuable which tells us how we may be saved, and so secure a happiness which none can describe ?

The Scriptures then, are an inestimable blessing. But blessings may be used rightly or wrongly. People may receive them with thankfulness, and turn them to the purpose for which they were intended ; or they may use them amiss, and lose their benefits. Thus S. Peter tells us, that even in his days, the writings of S. Paul were wrested by

unlearned and unstable men to their own destruction.

Let me, with God's help, very briefly point out one or two of the misuses of Holy Scripture, and then show how we ourselves may hope to use it with profit.

1. First of all then, it is a great abuse of the Holy Scriptures to employ them merely as an exercise for the intellect, without any attempt to act upon them. It is too common a fault. The Holy Scriptures were intended to make us believe and act aright ; to sanctify the whole man ; to convert us body, soul, and spirit, into the image of JESUS CHRIST ; to make us new creatures. But any one of the commonest observation must know, that by far the greater portion of Christians, are fond of discussing subjects intellectually, disputing about them, and deciding perhaps rather presumptuously this way or that, without having the most distant intention of reducing any of them to practice. How often do we hear people speaking peremptorily, inveighing against this as falsehood, and eulogizing that as the only truth ; who in their lives evidently care not for the truth, but pass their time irreli-

giously are thoughtless, worldly, covetous, slanderers, and even worse ; who though they have thus much of the form of godliness, that they talk about it, yet are without the power of godliness : and whilst “ they profess that they know God, in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” Alas ! these persons have quite mistaken the purpose of the Scriptures, which was to make them wise unto salvation, and holy as God is holy : teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST. It is fearfully irreverent to God, and to the book which He has given, merely to make it a topic of debate, and not to walk by the rules which it contains ; to draw from it subjects for argument or strife, and not to make it the guide of our lives : nay, such persons, whilst they think themselves wise, generally fall into grievous errors ; they become fools ; for they have reversed God’s order, and are visited by Him with blindness. His instruction is, that

they should first conform their lives to such things as they know ; by this their hearts would be purified, and He would gradually lead them on to the knowledge of doctrines ; they, I say, reverse this—they, though impure, and full of passion, think to master all doctrines, to systematize all Scripture, though they submit not to it in their lives. A blind man may as well expect to see, before his blindness is removed.

This then is the first abuse, the bad habit people have of discussing strongly, and deciding infallibly on the doctrines and deep things of that book ; the precepts of which they utterly repudiate. Such men will surely be punished.

2. Another very common, and blameable misuse of Scripture, is the not using it honestly. Every one here will allow, that the Scriptures are written by inspiration of God, and that, as God cannot lie, their contents are equally true. But it is a very common thing for persons to receive just as much as they like of the Scriptures, and no more ; they have their prepossessions, opinions, theories, likings ; and that which falls in with them they receive, whilst that which

seems to oppose them they put by. An extreme instance of this, is that of an author mentioned by Bishop Bull, who finding it impossible to make S. James agree with his opinions, was for thrusting him out of the Bible altogether, and he speaks thus: "He," that is S. James, "writes in direct opposition to Scripture, he quotes it falsely, and contradicts the Holy Spirit, the Law, the Prophets, CHRIST, and all the Apostles; his testimony is of no weight." See whither passion and prejudice, and unwillingness to receive the whole of Scripture could lead a man: truly, he says in another passage, "He," that is S. James, "lies against his own life." Alas! my brethren, these kind of men are not passed away, we are all perhaps of us more or less guilty. Is there no doctrine, or precept, which the Church enjoins, as plain, perhaps plainer in Scripture than many other things which we receive, and yet we reject it at our own pleasure? What shall I instance? I suppose fasting is not much practised among us: doubtless some practise it, but as a general rule it is neglected and laid aside. Now let us look at the Scripture. When our LORD says, in the

sixth chapter of S. Matthew, "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," we consider it quite plain, that it is the duty of a Christian to give alms; when a few verses below, our LORD gives directions about prayer, we feel that it is our duty to pray; but directly our LORD says, in the seventeenth verse of the same chapter, "When thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy FATHER which is in secret," we turn our heads aside—we have nothing to do with it. I am not now contending for this practice. I am saying nothing about it. I would only observe that it is worth while for us to consider upon what grounds we practise the two and omit the third; we whose boast it is, that we are entirely guided by Scripture.

If these are abuses of the holy Scripture, and surely it must be acknowledged that they are so, let us now endeavour to ascertain in what way God's Word may be turned to our profit?

1. First then, if we would ever be benefited by the Scriptures, we must approach them with humility. We must not take

them up as we would any other volume, but consider them to be what they are, not the word of man, but the Word of God. We should reflect on our own unworthiness to read them, that they are from God that owing to our ignorance as well as sins, much must be concealed from us, and that we can never know their full meaning till we are in heaven.

2. In the next place we must be sincere; I mean, we must not be of those persons mentioned just now, who take what they please and holding up one part, violate another. We must not take that book in our hands, for curiosity or mere information, out of custom or for strife. But what we find there we must in all sincerity practise. This must be our resolve;—to be honest with our God, and to believe and do what He tells us; and after a thought on our own weakness, we must lift up a prayer for His strength, that He will open our eyes and incline our hearts.

3. If now with this preparation we open the sacred volume, many things will appear quite plain and obvious. Hardly any one can mistake such passages as these; “Thou

shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.” “Lay not up for thyself treasure upon earth, where the moth and the rust corrupteth, but lay up treasure in heaven.” “What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?” “The LORD JESUS shall come in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God.” “They who do the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” “Blessed are the meek, the merciful, the pure of heart, the peace-makers, and they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” “Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.” “He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after Me cannot be My disciple.” I have taken these passages as they occur, but you know the Bible is full of such; in understanding which there can be no difficulty for the poorest, they are so plain and manifest. Now what are these plain statements for? Why are they so numerous, so often repeated, so obvious to every eye, so comprehensible to the simplest, but that they are necessary for us all? If then the Bible be the book of God; if it

be all truth, if we really respect it, let us be careful to put in practice and to receive into our belief, those things which thus meet us everywhere; those things upon which there can be no real doubt, save where people wish to doubt that they may not obey.

4. But every now and then in reading the Scriptures, difficulties will occur; and this must be the case, for many reasons. First we very often misunderstand passages in any ordinary book we take up. Much more may this be the case in the Bible, which was written by many authors, a long time ago, in many lands, and which refers to customs, manners, and circumstances, of another age, with which we are imperfectly acquainted. Besides, the Bible was written in another tongue, and now we have it turned into our own, and perhaps it would be beyond the power of any man to do this without leaving many of the passages obscure and dark. And then again many parts of the Bible are even in the original extremely difficult, because of the nature of the subjects of which they treat, such as, the being of God, His nature, His incarnation, His continual presence in the world. These are things we

are to believe, but who can understand them?
“Canst thou by searching find out God?”

I am taking a practical view of the matter, and trying to say what may be useful. The course of a humble-minded Christian is this, to reflect upon, to digest, and act upon what he understands; and if there be parts which after a little thought he does not understand, not unnecessarily to trouble himself, but to pass them by. This must be the case with us all. I think we may safely say, that a man never lived, who was thoroughly skilled in the whole of Scripture; and it is quite certain that the great mass of mankind cannot understand a large portion of it; but there is much that we every one can understand, can act upon, can guide our lives by, and which if we do so, will be the power of God unto salvation. Read the Scriptures then humbly and diligently; whatever is plain make use of, whatever is dark pass by, till some future time when God will perhaps reveal even that unto you. Or if He does not, do not repine, it is far better to be ignorant than to put on the holy text a meaning of your own, and to make God speak with earthly tongues.

5. But there are some things about which we ought not to be thus ignorant ; important fundamental points on which there are great differences, and with regard to which, from want of learning and time, and the habit of study, we can of ourselves come to no certainty from the Scriptures. In this case our guide is the voice of the universal Church ; I mean that the voices of all Christians in all ages cannot but be true : and if we can ascertain that one doctrine has been taught unanimously, that must be the doctrine of Scripture. Private readers from want of knowledge and from not understanding technicalities may doubt the meaning of any particular law ; but if in the opinion of every lawyer, and of every judge, and after laborious investigation of every precedent, the law has one definite meaning ; can there be a doubt after that what that meaning is ? We have superior evidence for all the chief truths of our religion—they are in the Scriptures ; but if any one doubt, or does not see them clearly, or denies that they are in the Scriptures—we have the testimony, in every age, in every Church, in every part of the world ; by every class, by laymen, by Bishops,

by Priests, and Deacons ; by treatises, by sermons, by liturgies, by councils ; that such and such are the doctrines of the Gospel. We have this evidence supplied by God, to illustrate the Scriptures, to settle doubts on them, and to guide us into truth.

Let it then be our practice to read the Scripture with humility, as a gift sent from God ; not expecting to know or understand all it contains, but hoping that the LORD will grant us to understand more and more. Next, let us not put aside what we dislike or disapprove, but sincerely follow what is obvious and plain : this alone will bring to us more knowledge : this alone will prove us to be sincere, and this only shows that our boast of following the Bible is not hypocrisy. Next, with regard to obscure, difficult, and as it may appear to us irreconcilable passages, let us be content to be ignorant of them, and at all events let us not torture and pervert them to our own private notions, the very contradictory perhaps of their real meaning. Lastly, upon points which come at any time into dispute, let us bow to the voice of the universal Church. This was the rule by which our own Church was reformed—this

is the rule laid down by our divines. "If we would be secured from error and falling, we must beware that we do not pertinaciously adhere to the private opinions and conjectures of ourselves or others, but do rather carefully examine what the ancient Church, or at least, the great majority of Christians held in these matters; and must acquiesce in that decision, which has obtained the consent of Christians of all ages: for the consent of all Christians may be deservedly accounted the voice of the Gospel."* "Whatever are sanctioned by the consent of the Catholic Fathers, and ancient Bishops, though my own small ability attain not to them, yet I will embrace them with all reverence. In truth I had already learned by not a few experiments while yet a young man, what now in my mature age I am most thoroughly persuaded of, that no one can contradict Catholic consent, however he may seem to be countenanced for a while by some passages of Scripture wrongly understood, without being found in the end to have contradicted both Scripture and sound reason."†

* Bishop Beveridge.

† Bishop Bull.

In the Prayer Book which we use daily, our own Church professes to present us with this Catholic consent. In the daily prayers, in the services for Baptism and the Communion, in the Ordination Services, in the Creeds,—She professes to give us, what has been universally held to be the true meaning of holy Scripture. Let us study them together; let us read one by the light of the other, and thus by those two aids which God gave us to assist, and which man cannot separate, without falling into error;—by the teaching of the holy Scripture and the Church, equally His Divine gift, we shall be guided into truth.

SERMON IX.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

COL. II. 6, 7.

“AS YE HAVE THEREFORE RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO WALK YE IN HIM: ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM, AND STABLISHED IN THE FAITH, AS YE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, ABOUNDING THEREIN WITH THANKSGIVING.”

WE call ourselves Christians ; we hope, and trust that we are Christians ; and did any one affirm the contrary, we should think it injurious and unkind. Yet what is implied in the name Christian ? That we are true disciples of Him Whose name we bear ; that we accept heartily His religion ; that we look to Him for salvation ; that we obey His laws. Of this the Apostle reminds us in our text. He supposes that we have

received CHRIST; and therefore says, "As ye have received CHRIST JESUS the LORD, so walk ye in Him." He supposes that we have been taught His Holy Gospel; and therefore he admonishes that we be "rooted and built up in Him—that we be stablished in the faith wherein we have been taught—and that we abound therein with thanksgiving."

Shall I mention one truth which you have received concerning CHRIST JESUS the LORD, in order that you may examine whether you so walk in Him—that is, whether your faith and your practice, what you profess and what you do, are consistent; whether looking at your walk, your conversation, your daily life, the passions by which you are oppressed, the rare virtues you practise, an ignorant person would suppose that you held the truths of revelation, the high and heavenly doctrines of the Gospel?

Among other things you have received this: that when the world was in darkness, the Almighty God in great compassion sent to it light; He sent His only begotten Son in human flesh to teach the way to Heaven. You know that the early sun rising in the

morning scatters the darkness, and enables men to walk aright ; and therefore, as really scattering the darkness of error and ignorance, so that by Him men might see the way to Heaven, CHRIST JESUS is called the Sun of righteousness. Again He says, " I am the light of the world : he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." And by the Prophet He is foretold, as " a Light to lighten the Gentiles." Behold the nations of the earth in darkness ! behold them in deep slumber ; or in their attempt to extricate themselves, stumbling amidst pitfalls and desolate mountains. But a light shines, and they see their way clear to the blessed Jerusalem. " Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee ;" they see the whole path marked out, the aids afforded them, and the dangers to be shunned, by the teaching of JESUS CHRIST ; and therefore the LORD JESUS CHRIST is said to be our Prophet. " A Prophet shall the LORD GOD raise up among you like unto me." A prophet here means a teacher. As I Moses have brought directly from God a religion for you Jews, so there shall arise another Teacher in times to come, who shall bring a

religion and a law for the whole world ;—Him ye must hear.

Now, then, beloved brethren, you have received, do you so walk? I mean the LORD JESUS CHRIST is your Teacher—do you seek to be taught? Do you seek to learn of that Divine Teacher more and more, and to grow in grace, and the knowledge of our LORD JESUS CHRIST? How do men flock to an eminent teacher! O, how should you flock when God is that Teacher!—how do men seek every opportunity, and secure the best instruction for the accomplishments of this world! Will you not receive the graces of Heaven? What I want you to consider, is, whether you are taking advantage of that Divine Teacher you have, the LORD JESUS CHRIST; whether you are trying to understand His religion; whether you endeavour to improve your knowledge of it; whether you practise His Divine lessons; whether it be your study to conform yourselves to His pattern? “I pray,” says S. Paul to the Ephesians, “that God will give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowlege of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may

know what is the hope of your calling." In another place, "I pray that ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that ye might walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." S. Peter writes, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Thus, you see, that a rightly informed understanding;—a right belief, and a right life as the fruit and consequence of this belief, are what Scripture means by the knowledge of CHRIST; and it regards that man who continues in sin, as being quite ignorant of the true knowledge of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. "Ye," it is said to such, "neither know Me, nor My FATHER." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." And

S. Paul, "They profess that they *know* God, but in *works* they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." And in another passage he says of men who are lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; of all these, he says (and alas! how many of us come under some one of these descriptions) that having a form of godliness they deny the power thereof, and that they are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, so that he only has a right knowledge of the LORD JESUS CHRIST who is conformable to His life and conversation.

Now will you let me mention one or two of the things which hinder our arriving at this true knowledge of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? one very great hindrance is this, that we suppose ourselves already to know all that is necessary; we read our Bible, we pray and we worship publicly, but without any desire to be more and more perfect; this is not our aim: we remain content with our

present degree of knowledge, and we do not improve, perhaps we go backward. My brethren, the first step to a true knowledge of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is to feel that we are ignorant of Him, or at the least that we know little, fearfully little, considering that we have a Divine and Almighty Teacher. He is the wisdom of God, He by His Spirit searcheth the deep things of God. What great matters hath He revealed in His holy Scriptures, and would still make known to our hearts, if only we would seek after Him to find Him. Will you say that you can repeat the principal doctrines of Scripture, will you say that you can argue out of them, and refute and put down your adversary? Can you, my brethren, put down your principal adversary, the Devil? Do you know how to refute *him*, how to put *him* down? Your Almighty Teacher, the LORD JESUS CHRIST came to teach you this lesson especially;—how to conquer the devil and fleshly lusts, because you were in bondage and the devil's slaves. He came to teach you how to throw off this slavery, and to prevent his conquering you again. Can you do this? When tempted

suddenly are you so perfect in spiritual knowledge, that you know how to employ weapons, that shall drive your adversary to the utmost sea. Now I believe it to be quite true when I say, that by far the greater part of us are without this knowledge, to the end of our days. We do not know how to answer the tempter when he comes, we do not know how to drive him away, we do not know how to prevail against him, we do not know how to make it impossible, that he should sway us at all to evil; neither do we seek this knowledge, though it is the very knowledge which the LORD JESUS came to give, and which His Gospel affords. We are content with our present knowledge, and are proud because we can quote a text or two from Scripture, and are puffed up because we hold, as we call it, a pure faith; and this we suppose to be religious knowledge; as if that could be religious knowledge, which allows us to be irreligious, and a pure faith, permitting impurity. O Apostle, true are thy words, "If any man *think* that he knoweth anything *he* knoweth nothing yet, as he ought to know." 'Though he flatter himself that he knows much, he knows nothing. He

has altogether mistaken the mission of the LORD, he does not know CHRIST, as God, as ALMIGHTY, as renewing him within, as giving him power against the flesh and the devil, as changing him from bad to good. He is still bad, angry, malicious, unchaste, covetous, a drunkard, a backbiter, a slanderer, a cheat, a liar; and yet he will tell you that *he* knows the LORD JESUS CHRIST. But he knows nothing, brethren, as he ought to know. He knows the Gospel, but he knows it only as the devil loves to teach it to his followers. For surely this is one of Satan's most subtle devices, to persuade people that they have the pure Gospel of the LORD, when they have but the form of it, and not the substance; to lead them to stand up for and be idly busy and zealous—for a doctrine, perhaps for a word—whilst they are themselves empty of godliness and the Spirit's fruits, whilst notwithstanding their proud words and presumed knowledge, they are practically without God and without CHRIST.

But before a man can hope to be changed even by the power of Almighty God, he must be sensible of his condition; his first step towards a true knowledge, must be

the knowledge of his own farness from God, he must come to see what is meant by knowing CHRIST, and his own most melancholy distance from the first elements of knowledge. Would to God you would begin to suspect yourselves. Would to God you would not consider yourselves the very wisest men upon earth. This is your ruin, but you must come down, you must humble yourselves if you would be exalted; you must, by comparing yourselves, with the Scripture, see and confess that you are ignorant, lest it be said to you as it was to the Pharisees, "because ye say, We know, therefore your sin remaineth."

But not only are men conceited; fancying that each one, for himself, knows the Gospel of CHRIST, though they are quite ignorant of it as it ought to be known; but they are prejudiced. And this is another great hindrance of true knowledge. If you were to consider you would all be able to trace your opinions to some source or another; you call them now your own, but they are not your own originally, for some neighbour gave them to you; some book, or some friend, taught you this or that, and you will not consider whether it

is right or wrong, but you hold it fast. And this is the case with most men, and sometimes to their very great injury, because it hinders their acknowledging the truth when set before them. We have sad instances of this in our LORD's days. The Pharisees were in expectation that the MESSIAH would come as a great King. He came, you know, as a man of sorrows, and as a carpenter's son, and so they could not receive Him. Our LORD tells them, that if they searched the Scriptures with unprejudiced eyes, they would see that they were mistaken. He declares that it was mere obstinacy and prejudice which prevented their acknowledging Him, expressed in these words, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye may have life;" and in another place, "Why will ye not believe My words?" and again, "believe Me for My works' sake." "Look at My miracles, let them convince you;" but nothing convinced them, they were more and more, instead of being less, set against Him. Their prejudices and violence grew ungovernable. They gnashed upon Him with their teeth; they would have thrown Him down headlong from a precipice, and they

ended by devoting Him to the most cruel death ; such is the strong obstinacy of prejudice which Almighty God Himself, Who never forces, but only persuades, could not overrule.

And you may remember an assurance also, coming from our LORD Himself, that prejudice is indeed a great hindrance to our salvation, where, speaking by the mouth of Abraham, He informs us, that “ some will not even listen to the dead.” My brethren, if a spirit were to come from the dead, and warn back from sin, or preach the truths of the everlasting Gospel, some men would not listen. A spirit, you will say, is a fearful thing. A being who has walked among the departed and seen the never dying fire, aye, and felt the excruciating worm, must be a terrible form to look on ; and who would be so hard as not to listen to him ? Thou wouldst not ; if thy prejudice or hardness is so great as to prevent thy heeding the Scriptures or our words, “ neither wouldst thou hear, though one should rise from the dead.”

And if, beloved brethren, obstinate prejudice be so strong, that neither a spirit from Hell, nor God Himself from Heaven can

overcome it, what can we, poor ministers of CHRIST, who have our treasure in earthen vessels, expect? How can we persuade, when our Master failed? What must we look for, when the LORD was crucified? For be sure the same hard worldly prejudices and the same hostility to good exist; think you the spirit is extinct which nailed God to the Cross? or think you that men are readier to follow truth? or that a thing is untrue because the multitude resist it? Are men less corrupt? are they less sinful? are they less the prey of their passions? and if not, then are they as likely to be blinded by prejudice, as when they nailed the SAVIOUR to the tree.

For ourselves, let our minds be teachable like that of a child; "for except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of God." Let us open our hearts freely to God; let us hear what the LORD GOD will say unto us. Speak, LORD, for Thy servant heareth; speak, O Divine Teacher, and let us not be stubborn against truth; for surely it is the worst thing possible to be hardened and blinded against immortal light—against the light which the

LORD JESUS committed to His Church to be taught to all the world—against that truth supernatural which is to set us free ; free from all prejudice, and sinfulness, and ignorance, and make us serve CHRIST with a joyous heart. But is it possible that we should stand out against truth ? I tell you, that men like yourselves put to death the very Truth itself ; they stumbled at and resisted, and mocked and insulted Him ; and some even of His professed followers, when He began to unfold some of His higher doctrines, went backward—they could not receive or bear them ; and, therefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

For, my brethren, the truth is, the greater part of us love sin, which is the third and chief hindrance to knowledge. Ah ! this is the fatal mountain between us and CHRIST ; this shuts Him from our sight, that we love the solicitings of the evil spirit and the lusts of the flesh. Say I not truth ? “ If our Gospel be hid,” says S. Paul, “ it is hid to them that are lost—in whom the devil hath blinded their hearts, lest the Gospel should shine upon them.” “ And the wisdom,” S. James writes, “ which is sensual and earthly,

is not from above." What a solemn warning, you earthly-minded people!—wise after the world's wisdom, clever schemers and speculators, prudent and careful gatherers of money; and you, sensual people, following sensible pleasures, indulging your bodies and desires; whatever wisdom you have, even though you sometimes talk religiously, is not from above; it is devilish—it is from Satan. But the wisdom which is from above, the knowledge given by JESUS CHRIST, is first pure: this is a preliminary, necessary to the attainment of it; nay, this is a part of it—to be pure, and then to be gentle and full of peace.

And thus John the Baptist began, and thus our SAVIOUR began; "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Lo, the glorious promises of the ancient Prophets are about being fulfilled; lo, light, and truth, and love and peace, and eternal life are nigh. Would you be benefited? first lay down your sins. The kingdom of Heaven is at hand: joyous and happy kingdom for those who share it; great is the knowledge and truth which shall be given them. Would you avail yourselves of this coming kingdom,

repent ; have done with sin ; cast it from you ; be sorry for it. This was our SAVIOUR'S teaching ; this was S. John Baptist's teaching.

Besides this, there is a still further reason why sin prevents the knowledge of CHRIST. He who is the slave of any one sin is like a man with a veil across his face : the light, the truth, salvation cannot reach him. He is like a man with a thick covering over his eyes going out into the day : what can he see ? The glorious warm sun may shine upon him, and the hills may be beautiful, and the trees waving with fruit, and the flowers have all the colours of the world, and the sea be dotted with sails, but he can behold none of them ; and so it is when you unclosethe your Bible, or kneel in the Church, or listen to our preaching. All these sights from Heaven, all these words of truth, all these beautiful things from Paradise, touch you not, do not penetrate, affect, or alter you, because you have a thick veil over your heart. That veil is the sin which you know of, and still maintain ; and which, as long as you hold fast, you never can know the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Ah ! this is the reason why

men go backwards ; this is that of which it is so difficult to persuade men, which they do not like to hear, which they reject, and call hard names ; this is what, if they only believed, the work would be done—the hardest part of their salvation secured. It is this, that they cannot have any true knowledge of CHRIST in company with sin ; that CHRIST and Belial, CHRIST and covetousness, CHRIST and anger, CHRIST and malice, CHRIST and revenge, CHRIST and unchastity ; CHRIST without prayer, self-restraint, modesty, meekness, purity, cannot *be*—that the rebel, if he would be reconciled to his Divine King, and be taken into friendship and have favours showered upon him—forgiveness, holiness, strength ; must lay down his arms—his sins ; must cease to be a rebel ; and that if he would come to a true knowledge of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and see the glories of His countenance, he must lay aside the stifling dark veil which conceals them.

This is but reasonable : do what you know, and the LORD will reveal to you more. “ Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” Now you know that sin, and

worldliness, and covetousness, and the neglect of religious observances, are wrong; you know also that CHRIST hath commanded otherwise; and can you presume, whilst in open rebellion, to suppose that you have religious knowledge? No! practise the first easy lessons, and then the LORD will teach you more; in what you know obey your SAVIOUR, and He will expand your knowledge; when you "are faithful in a few things, He will make you master over many things." When you set earnestly to the doing His will, the veil will fall off, and you shall know of His doctrine; you will be able to receive the truth, which now you cannot.

Let this suffice. Take heed of the hindrances to Divine knowledge. Be afraid of self-satisfaction and the conceit of knowing all things, lest, "thinking yourselves wise, ye become fools." Be afraid of an obstinate prejudice against what we teach you, lest you thereby trample under foot, and blindly oppose, the very Gospel itself. Above all, be afraid of any sin: flee it (the wise man advises) "as a serpent;" because, not only is it in itself hateful, not only are sin and the knowledge of

CHRIST incompatible, but it shuts you out from the possibility of that knowledge : it blinds, stupifies, hardens, and makes a man reprobate. But do the contrary : cease from sin ; cast your sins from you, by the help of that power you have already ; strive and pray to be humble and diffident ; strive to be unprejudiced, and desire to learn the truth. Then will the LORD teach you ; He will open your hearts ; He will enlarge your understanding ; He will make you comprehend the deep things of GOD. Those things which angels desire to look into shall be familiar to you, and common ; the ways and practices of the saints shall be your delight and joy, for if through grace we only attain to the right spirit and attitude of learners, what may we not reach when our Teacher is very God ?

SERMON X.

FAITH NOT SIGHT.

2 COR. v. 7.

“FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT.”

THE Apostle in this, and some other verses, declares that it was his peculiar boast and privilege as a *Christian*, to “walk by faith.” In his dangers for CHRIST’S sake what supported him? “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” In the loss of all things, in the prospect of perpetual imprisonment, of a violent death, of the judgment to come, what gave him courage? “we walk by faith, not by sight.”

Faith is here contrasted with sight. Others walked altogether, or chiefly, by sight ;

the Apostle, as a Christian, walked by faith.

It will be admitted that the heathen nations, with whom the Apostle had much to do, "walked by sight." They have, indeed, in all parts of the world, some divine knowledge, some separated fragments of that glorious whole, which GOD ALMIGHTY gave to the Patriarch. All the earth is descended from Noah ; and those truths which he taught his children, though perverted or disguised, have never quite disappeared.

And hence individuals here and there, though neither Jew nor Christian, have had their measure of faith. Job is a striking example. The father-in-law of Moses is another. The King of Babylon, in the Book of Daniel, acknowledges the Most High God. Nineveh furnishes us with the example of a great city fearfully irreligious, yet retaining so much of primitive knowledge as to turn at the preaching of the Prophet. All this was guidance from on high, the original seed still struggling against the world's leaven ; the light of God asserting its superiority to human darkness. The good in any degree were such, not in consequence of heathen

principles, but in spite of them ; the few who had retained something of God in their knowledge—"that light which lighteth every man coming into the world."

But the heathen nations, as a whole, walked by sight: they worshipped material gods, gods they could *see*. They had a heaven, but it was a heaven like this earth, ministering to their lusts. They had no conception at all, speaking generally, of the soul, or of God, as a Spirit. Their eyes were limited to this world, or to a future world more sensual than the present ; so that whatever exceptions there may have been, the general appearance of things was such as to warrant the saying "there is none that doeth good, no not one."

But now let us turn to the Jews. As the earth was in this condition, the Almighty FATHER thought fit to discover Himself to *that* people, reviving forgotten things, and adding to them new: and inasmuch as He gave to them a larger revelation, they had more numerous objects for their faith. Yet still, as the fulness of time was not yet come, as the last and most complete revelation was not yet given, it is clear that the Jews them-

selves, to a degree, “walked by sight.” We, says the Apostle, by way of contrast—we Christians, living under the Spirit, having the HOLY GHOST, which the law never afforded; we, being a spiritual people, living in a spiritual kingdom, the Church of CHRIST, and looking with divinely illumined eyes at the things unseen—walk by faith alone, and are not aided by any objects of sight.

In this we differ from the Jew. The Jew had sight constantly to aid and support his faith. Take the doctrine, first, that “the wages of sin is *death*.” How was this proved to the Jew? Why, when Pharaoh resisted the LORD, and oppressed His people, instant plagues fell on him. When the Jews themselves made a calf in Horeb, there fell by the sword of the Levites about three thousand men; when, on another occasion, they complained and murmured, fire from the LORD consumed them in their camps. But how is it under CHRIST? May I not affirm that the Christian man commits the darkest crimes, apparently unnoticed? There is no voice from heaven—no whisper of the sin—no earth to swallow him up—no dreadful

fire to consume. If, through grace, we hold the doctrine that the ALMIGHTY punishes sin, it is not by the evidence of sight ;—we attain to it by faith.

It may be said, that God *does* punish sin, even here ; but do *all* confess this ? They do not. The *faithful* man, when he sees the profligate suffering, will see that it is a punishment from God ; but others think it a mere accident—punishment does not follow sin now, in such a regular marked manner, as to *compel* the assent, to its coming from God. Those who acknowledge it, do so by faith, not by sight.

But this difference in the ALMIGHTY's dealings with the Jew and the Christian may be noticed in some other points.

Take the institution of the Jewish Church. It was of God, a Heaven-born thing, framed after the pattern given in the Mount : but how was this evidenced to their sight ? “ Mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the LORD descended in the fire ; ” “ the sight of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire in the *eyes* of the children of Israel ; ” and “ when Moses came down from the Mount, the skin of his face

shone.” All this was an evidence addressed to *sight*, that he brought an institution from God.

Take the doctrine that the LORD was come to dwell among His people. In token of this, the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the *sight* of all the houses of Israel throughout their journeys. Take the inviolability of the Priesthood: “I will sanctify Aaron and his sons to minister unto Me in the Priest’s office.” Did any intrude upon it? There was evidence given to sight, that God was offended. “The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained to Korah, and all their goods.”

I might quote unnumbered instances of this kind, showing that all through their history the Jewish people had the aids of sight. In latter times their dreadful sufferings when they neglected their solemn feasts, when they broke the sabbaths, when they forsook God, His House, His Priests, and set up altars where they chose, and performed their worship under every green tree, and made them Priests of the lowest of the people, were

proof of this. Lastly, what was their carrying away to Babylon but an evidence addressed to sight, to their *outward* senses; God's punishment on the sin of forsaking His institutions?

The Holy Catholic Church to which we belong is also divine—divine in her original formation, in her faith, and institutions. As Moses framed the Church in the wilderness after the pattern showed him in the Mount, so did the Apostles the Church Universal after the pattern showed them by CHRIST. They added people to their company by baptizing, they confirmed them with the HOLY GHOST, they assembled them for daily prayer and Eucharist, they appointed Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, to rebuke and to exhort; they caused holy discipline to be exercised, retaining and forgiving sins: and seeing they were inspired, the system is divine. CHRIST guided them in their doings, as afterwards in their writings; and that man is inconsistent, who, whilst he receives the one, receives not the other. If they were not taught of God in what they did, neither were they in what they wrote; if in what they wrote, then in what they did. They

were led by God in *all* things for the Church, or in none. Which will men choose? If the Apostles' *writings* be divine, so is the Church which they formed, seeing CHRIST said, "I will be with you always;" the HOLY GHOST shall "bring all things to your remembrance;" shall "lead you into *all* truth."

So convincing is this to humble minds which "walk by faith," that in all ages the large majority have been of the Apostle's Church. Now men question her authority; but do not some also question the Scriptures? And, I say, if men may do that, if they may pervert or deride the Apostles' writings, and God does not revenge, so may they the Apostles' Church, and He revenge not. Yet the Scriptures are divine, so then may be the Church. In truth, with regard to both, we walk by faith; by faith we acknowledge, reverence; obey both. The things which happened of old times are our ensamples, and we can only acknowledge and act upon them by faith. Anciently, when little children insulted the Prophet, a lion came out of the forest and destroyed them; when an insolent king would stop the servant of the

LORD, his arm was withered. That was *sight*. But when the Jews of Antioch drove the Apostles from their coasts, this was all they did—"they shook off the dust of their feet against them," they left them to gather by faith, that judgment would follow.

So again, upon the sad subject of intrusion into the ministry of the Church. By faith alone it is seen to be wrong; by faith only will men shrink from it. Does not S. Peter warn us against the "gainsaying of Core?" to what end? That we may contemplate it by faith; and that no man may take this honour but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. "But no ill effects follow!" Here, again, you judge by sight. But *do* no ill effects follow? Is schism nothing? Is it nothing that there are as many opinions as men; that instead of one Church, one faith, we have many bodies and differing faiths? "Where there is among you," says the Apostle, "envy and strife and division, are ye not carnal and walk as men?" God, perhaps, visits not *apparently* with vengeance, and much zeal is shown; but when you consider how much is done through envy and strife; how party spirit moves whilst love for God

is the pretence; when you reflect that so long as it is maintained that there is no one true faith which we are bound to hold, no one true Church to which we are bound to adhere, union is impossible, and CHRIST's commandment must be broken; if you consider, too, the fearful moral effects, the self-will which is engendered, and contempt of authority among mere children, and how the result of holding that all faiths are alike, ends, as every one knows, in having no faith at all; if we consider all this, and much besides, we cannot then say no ill effects have followed; something we see; but though we did not, and all seemed fair and successful, we must not violate the commandment of CHRIST—we must walk by faith.

So a right view of the divine Sacraments can only be apprehended by faith. "According to your faith," is the Christian rule, "so be it unto you." The grace is great, and the mystery divine in proportion to faith. The mystery is nothing, the benefit unreal, as faith is low. The LORD has revealed this wonderful fact, that these are the modes of communicating with Him—the path by which

He of His mercy vouchsafes to dwell in us, and we in Him. Having formed a Church, He hath appointed a ministry to perform these outward acts of inward grace, to give the visible signs and seals, and pledges of invisible communion;—in holy baptism, engrafting into CHRIST; in the LORD'S Supper, feeding us with His Blood. I need not prove these things, our Prayer-book is open. I merely observe, that amazing as these truths are, they are not *self-evident*. CHRIST forces them not on men; humbly, meekly, patiently, prayerfully must the evidence for them be weighed, and with faith. Not with irreverent scepticism must a man enter on these truths, not with lightness, not with immature judgment; not with an unchastened, confident spirit, pronouncing boldly this way or that. This is fearful sin. "It is much more easy, and more falls in with the negligence, presumption and wilfulness of the generality, to determine at once with a decisive air, that there is nothing in it."* Is "the *decisive air*" *uncommon*? Faith, humble faith is

* Bishop Butler.

wanted ; we walk by faith, by which we behold these material things conveying to us spiritual, earth touching heaven, the hem and border of the mysterious garment, by which we reach CHRIST and are whole.

And now if it be true, that the LORD JESUS Who hath ascended up on^high, has a body mystical on earth, on which He bestows His gifts, of which those who are saved are members, which is the doorway and access into the company and communion of the blessed Saints and glorified Apostles ; and we who believe “in one Catholic and Apostolic Church,” can hardly think otherwise ; then is it not sad that this truth is so generally discredited ? Nay, is not the very discredit with which it is received, thought to be an argument against it ? “Is it likely,” we often hear it said, “that so many persons of so diversified communions should be wrong ?” Indeed it is very likely, for we should remember, that whilst it is the privilege of the Christian “to walk by faith” just as it is, to be full of divine love, and to be “holy,” it is expressly foretold, that in the last days, some shall walk after their own ungodly lusts, that of *many* “the love shall wax cold ;” whilst as

to *faith*, it shall be scarcely discernible. Yes ! it is the proper character of the Christian, his high privilege and title, “to walk by faith ;” but as the day of the LORD draws nigh, he will encourage the heart of unbelief. Hence our LORD’s solemn question, “when I come shall I find faith on the earth ?” and hence divines in all ages have conceived, that by antichrist is meant infidelity. Infidelity grown to a head, having earthly power on its side, and waging war against the saints of GOD most high. Certainly S. John is very plain on this subject. “He is antichrist, that denieth the FATHER and the SON ;” and it is striking when thought of, that very generally those who have begun by denying the Holy Church and sacramental power, have ended by denying the FATHER and the SON ; for both are mysteries, and he who is impatient of the one, has only a step to be impatient of the other. That the multitude then should despise the doctrines of the Church Universal, is neither surprising, nor any argument against them ; it is rather to be looked for ; growing unbelief is to be expected, for it is a sign of the last times.

This is a sufficiently awful consideration.

But it may be asked, "are we compelled to believe?" Is it not a sufficient excuse to say, we cannot believe, or in common language, "we cannot see it?" I fear not; the objection is, we cannot see it plainly: *sight* is asked for, and people will not believe, as long as there are any doubts or difficulties. "Now, the same account is to be given, why the evidence of religion should be left in such a manner as to require in some an attentive, solicitous, perhaps painful exercise of the understanding about it, as why others should be placed in such circumstances, that the practice of its common duties should require attention, solicitude and pains, or why apparent *doubtfulness*, should be permitted to afford matter of temptation to *some*, as why external difficulties should be permitted to afford matter of temptation to others."* We are responsible for the whole man, for the reason, intellect, assent, as for the body; one man may be tried as to facts, difficulties may meet him there, this is *his* trial. Another man is tried by fleshly lusts; and as in the latter case, when a man says

* Bishop Butler.

he cannot leave off his sins, he only *means* that he will not submit to the necessary discipline, he will not tame his body, or bring it into subjection ; so when a man says, I cannot believe, or see, such and such a truth, he means "I will not have the patience, the humility, the pains, the holiness, which is necessary to my seeing it." There is no impossibility in the thing, in the truth stated, otherwise none could see it ; but in that individual, who, "having eyes cannot see, and having ears cannot hear." Hence our Blessed LORD has said, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?" showing that there was some let, which being removed, they would be enabled to believe. And in other places He asks, "How is it ye do not understand? why do ye not believe My words;" showing that through grace, they might believe, but there was some impediment in themselves. And who seeks to remove this impediment? Who is even aware of it? How many are prepared to mortify their passions, and bear the cross first, as a step to knowing CHRIST? Yet is this the way; "He that doeth My will shall know of My doctrine." But the mass would comprehend, and if

they cannot comprehend, reject, the very highest doctrines; their bodies are unmortified, and their hearts are carnal, and hence they cannot receive the truth: But because they will not fit themselves by holy training, they are without excuse, the sin is theirs.

Thus we have seen, that though it is the Christian's privilege to walk by faith, it will be rare in the last days, (perhaps these are the last,) and yet that the unbelieving will be without excuse. I would make one more remark, that those who profess to walk by faith, must receive the *whole* faith, as delivered by CHRIST.

And this is important, because in an age like this, when *all* would be apostles, all pastors, all teachers, and *every* man hath a psalm, hath an interpretation, it is likely that incomplete views of the Gospel of CHRIST would be put forth, and that teachers, for the very ease with which it may be done, would take out parts of the holy book of God, as fancy suggests, or their capacity enables. And thus it has happened: and then too frequently they blame, nay, are intolerant of those, who, desiring to deliver "the whole counsel of God," take as they think, a

broad, more comprehensive, and so juster view of the revelation of JESUS CHRIST. All sectaries are intolerant because we will not call a part the *whole*, or say, *this* only is important, and these few truths, the Gospel ; the rest is valueless, not to be spoken, nay, though uttered by CHRIST, “unspiritual.”

It is convenient certainly thus to systematize the Scripture ; convenient for those who would be divines, to make a single truth, or two, the Gospel : for if *all* are to teach, the subject matter must be obvious.

How complacently do men settle the meaning of S. Paul's Epistle to the Romans ; they take a part here and there, as it suits their system, and so they think they understand it. Yet S. Jerome confesses it filled with obscurities. S. Augustine gave up his exposition of it, from its difficulty ; and S. Peter says, there are things in it hard to be understood, and such as people wrest to their destruction.

These were learned, devout, and one of them inspired ; we are neither ; they doubted, we are sure ; and it is in all things the same ; the judgment of the individual, though unlearned, unsubdued, unable

morally to receive the truth, is preferred before the voice of the Church Universal, to which the promise has been made of being led into *all* truth. If it be said the individual is taught by the SPIRIT ; what is the Catholic Church but the *House* in which the SPIRIT dwelleth, and the aggregate of millions taught by that very SPIRIT in all ages, in every part of the world ? and the whole is better than a part. The SPIRIT of CHRIST, I say, dwelling in the Church, has guided it in all ages to deliver one truth, without contradiction or change. Is He divided against Himself now ? Does He speak in the individual against His own commands, against His own voice, against His own teaching by the Church ? If the individual is taught by the SPIRIT, the whole Church is taught by the SPIRIT ; and CHRIST has decided for us : we must listen to the Church. May men listen to her voice, for that which individuals perhaps hold in dislocated portions, the Catholic Church teaches divinely adjusted. She teaches *all* that others teach, and *more* ; For they are distinguished as they give prominence to this or that fragment of truth ; The Church teaches *all* truth. Moreover she

has that which others have not, the divine commission to teach it, and the certain promise of divine blessing. But above all, she has the privilege, great and glorious, of incorporating her members into CHRIST, and filling them with the grace, and life, and SPIRIT of CHRIST. "From the SPIRIT vouchsafe me the truth of salutary grace. In the holy Catholic Church to have my own calling, and holiness, and portion, and a fellowship of her sacred writings and prayers, fastings and groans, vigils, tears, and sufferings; for assurance of remission of sins, for hope of resurrection, and translation to eternal life."* These truths indeed can only be recognized, these hopes cherished, by faith. "But *we* walk by faith."

* Bishop Andrewes.

SERMON XI.

FAITH—DEEDS NOT WORDS.

S. LUKE XVIII. 8.

“NEVERTHELESS WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH,
SHALL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?”

THERE is no greater proof, as it regards the Divine Scriptures, that holy men of old wrote as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST, than many things which they said would in future times come to pass, and which have happened as they said. For who can foretell things to come with an unfailing accuracy, but God? Who, for instance, could have known that the Divine SAVIOUR should be born of a virgin, and that God should dwell among us, and could therefore put into the heart and lips of His Prophet,

to say, "a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son;" but He "to Whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," to Whom all things are known from the beginning of the creation?

Now among other remarkable prophecies is that one of the prophet Daniel, the man beloved of God, and highly favoured, concerning the state of the world in the latter ages. He tells us, that in the latter times, towards the end, there shall be a great and surprising activity in the world, and a great spread of knowledge. His words are, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Now the expression "run to and fro," seems to imply, that nations should not be shut up in themselves, or separated from one another as in earlier times;—that there should be frequent intercourse and rapid communication, and that the inhabitants of the earth should be agile and busy, restless and ever moving; "they shall run to and fro," one characteristic of the end.

And moreover as the end approaches, there is to be a general spread of knowledge;—knowledge perhaps of all kinds,

information about the hitherto concealed secrets of the natural world, opening new and strange things to men's eyes, and unfolding, if they will hearken, from the bosom of the earth and the depths of heaven, more proofs of God's Almightyness. Now are these matters foretold so long ago by the prophet, in any degree being fulfilled in the present day? Is there the busy intercourse of nations, "the running to and fro" of which he speaks? and is it at all the character of the age, to desire and to spread knowledge? If so, it becomes us to remember what our Blessed LORD tells us shall accompany this state of things: "There shall be running to and fro," but "*love* shall grow cold;" "*knowledge* shall be increased," and "the Gospel shall be preached to all nations," and yet "shall I find *faith* on the earth?"

For, my brethren, you may know, that you were born in a state of wrath, and that the LORD JESUS died for you, and that He is gone up on high, and is God's SON, and hath sent down His Holy Spirit to make you holy, and will come again to judge you, and that the good will be happy in heaven, and the wicked tormented in hell. You may know all this,

and yet never take a single step in consequence of your knowledge ; and this kind of information may be spread through the world, and perhaps it is spreading, and yet men may have no faith ; because faith is a practical thing ; Faith loves and obeys God. Faith overcomes difficulties and bears hardships, for it is not one grace, but a congregation of virtues. In a word, it is the expression of the whole Christian character, without which we cannot be saved. Such is that faith, which can only please God.

And there shall be an increase of knowledge about our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, men shall know about Him, and have heard of Him. For “this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all the world, and then shall the end come.” And the prophet writes, “In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and they who are in darkness ; the eyes of the blind shall see.” “In the latter days ye shall know these things.” All which words serve to confirm what the prophet Daniel hath written, “knowledge,” he saith, “shall be increased.”

What, for instance, does our SAVIOUR

mean by the inquiry, "When I come, shall I find faith on the earth?" What does He mean by faith? Observe what goes before: He has just spoken a parable, to teach this lesson, that men ought always to *pray*. And He concludes by saying, "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which *cry* day and night unto Him? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily;" and then follows,— "Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?" What faith? the faith which *prays*; will men so believe on Me, as to be praying to Me when I come? This He calls faith. I said that faith, the faith which we must have if we would enter heaven, the faith which whosoever has, God will justify them at the last day,—this, I said, is a practical thing. Here for example it is praying—it is on its knees—before the footstool of God—it is contemplating the heavens full of angels, and the Lord coming in glory—it is engaged in devotion to that LORD; "it crieth day and night unto Him." This is the faith which our LORD hopes for, but despairs of finding when He comes; and so in other passages, the faith which is of any value is a praying faith.

“ Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye *pray*, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them ;” here is a glorious promise, not to faith by itself, but faith in prayer—faith praying, not faith simply believing. So S. James says, “ the *prayer* of faith, shall save the sick ;” but adds, “ it must be the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man ;” so that we cannot separate these graces in a man who shall be accepted ; faith shall prevail, but there must be prayer in faith, and fervour in prayer, and devotion in fervour, and righteousness in devotion. Nay, our LORD adds another thing ; “ When ye stand praying forgive, but if ye will not forgive, neither shall your FATHER forgive you ;” so that in addition to these you must have charity, for without charity there is no pardon.

Hence then the faith which our LORD looks for in us, the faith which if we have He will accept us, the faith which is necessary for every man, and without which we cannot sit down with the saints in glory ; this faith is but another word, for all the graces of the Christian, for our being new creatures, for our having new hearts, and new

spirits, and for our being conformable to the life and pattern of our LORD.

“When justification is attributed to faith, or salvation to godliness, they are to be understood in the aggregate sense: for that I may give but one instance of this, when S. Paul speaks of faith as it is a particular grace, and separate from the rest, he also does separate it from the possibility of bringing us to heaven: ‘Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.’ When faith includes love, it will bring to heaven; when it is alone, when it is without love, it will do nothing at all.”*

“That faith to which so many and so great things are attributed in the New Testament, is not to be taken for one single virtue, but comprehends all the works of Christian piety. So that wherever it is understood as a work by itself, and separated from all other virtues, the Holy Spirit, far from giving it the first rank, places it the *third after* charity: ‘and now abideth faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of these is charity.’ ”†

* Bishop Taylor.

† Bishop Bull.

My brethren, have love. Faith is praised, but what kind of faith this is the Apostle distinguishes. For certain who boasted of faith, and had not a good conversation, the Apostle James rebukes and says, "Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." Call to mind with me, whereupon Peter was praised, whereupon called blessed. Was it because he said, "Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD?" He Who pronounced him blessed, regarded not the sound of the words but the affection of the heart. For would you know that Peter's blessedness lay not in these words? The devils also said the same. "We know Thee Who Thou art, the SON of GOD." Peter confessed Him to be the SON of GOD; the devils confessed Him to be the SON of GOD. Distinguish between the two: Peter spake in love,—the devils from fear. And, again, Peter says, "I am with Thee even unto death." The devils say, "What have I to do with Thee?" So, then, glory not in faith only. Distinguish well the nature of this faith. Let the Apostle make the distinction; let him teach us: "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision,

but faith." Tell us what faith? Do not even the devils believe and tremble? I will tell thee, he says, and listen while I now draw the distinction. "But faith which worketh by love." What faith, then, and of what kind? that which worketh by love. "Though I have all knowledge," he says, "and all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Have faith with love—love without faith ye cannot have. This I warn, this I exhort; this, in the Name of the LORD, I teach you, beloved, that ye have faith with love; for you may possibly have faith without love. I do not exhort you to have faith, but love; for ye cannot have love without faith. How can he love God who does not believe in God? How doth the fool love God, who says in his heart There is no God? Possible it is that ye may believe that CHRIST hath come, and not love CHRIST; but it is *not* possible that you should *love* CHRIST, and yet say that CHRIST hath not come.*

This, then, is the kind of faith concerning which our SAVIOUR asks, "When the Son

* S. Augustine.

of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Does He mean by faith the bare knowledge about Him?—nay, there shall be plenty of this, for "knowledge shall increase." Does He mean by faith the mere confidence that we shall be saved by Him, the assurance for which some of us pant, whilst we do not pant to be conformed to CHRIST? Nay, this shall be no scarce thing; true faith shall be a scarce thing, but this sort of faith will not. For, listen: "Many will say to Me in that day, LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works?" These men were confident; their common language was, "LORD, LORD." They taught in the Name of CHRIST; they taught with zeal; they were able to cast out devils; they, in the Name of CHRIST, could do other wonderful works. How could they doubt about their condition?—they did not doubt. But neither their confidence nor miracles availed them. "I never knew you," He says, "depart from Me." And why? why were they to depart from Him? Because they were "workers of iniquity," because their faith was the faith



not of Christians, but of devils—not of good, but of wicked men ; because there were not in it, as a part of it, as inseparable from it, love to God and love to man—earnest prayer and ardent praise, watchfulness and submission, the denying self and doing good to others ; because it was that meagre, fruitless faith, of which S. James asks, Can faith save you ?—because it was the faith of the lips, expended in words and declarations, and false confidences, which our LORD says is utterly useless. “Not every one that *saieth* unto me, LORD, LORD, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My FATHER Which is in Heaven.”

Let us, then, my brethren, briefly examine our faith, and see where it leads us. “When,” it has been said, “your faith is spoken of as the great instrument of justification and salvation, take Abraham’s faith as your best pattern, and that will end the dispute, because that *he* was justified by faith, when his faith was mighty in *effect* : when he trusted in God, when he believed the promises, when he expected the resurrection of the dead, when he was strong in faith, when he gave glory to God, when against hope he believed

in hope : and when all this passed into an act of most glorious obedience, even denying his greatest desires, contradicting his most passionate affections, offering to God the best thing he had, and exposing to death his beloved Isaac, his laughters, all his joy at the command of God. By this *faith* he was justified, saith S. Paul ; by these works he was justified, said S. James ; that is, by this faith working this obedience. Let us, I say, try our faith, and see whether it be operative like Abraham's ;"* whether it bears us up in all the circumstances of life, and is our aid against temptations, and carries us in the path of righteousness and the will of God.

1. Let me suppose that you are distracted with the affairs of this life ; let it be supposed that you hardly know how to provide for your families. You have been born poor, or you have been made so by one of those turns, fearful yet wonderful, sudden and very frequent, by which the LORD, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, would show men their own feebleness, and how He lifteth up, or pulleth down. But this has happened ; and now to

* Bishop Taylor.

you your LORD and SAVIOUR says, "Take no thought what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink." Why are you anxious? Again He says, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Have you faith in CHRIST? But what does that mean? what do you understand by having faith in CHRIST, if you have not faith in His *words*—if you hold not what He says as *truth*? You are in distress, you are distracted. He says, I will provide for you these things; meat and drink, and clothing shall be yours. But how, and by what means? "Seek first the kingdom of God;" seek the righteousness of God; and these things shall follow. Now if you have faith in CHRIST, any real confidence in Him, you will surely try His remedies. It is idle, it is something like mockery, not to try His remedies, and yet to say you have faith in Him. Why do you complain of the world; talk of your bad fortune; why look only to human help; have recourse to unfair, dishonest and mean ways of advancing yourselves, and piling up that heap of earth, which the moth and rust shall consume? Why do you begin, continue, and end in this way, to the hour of

your death—to the last gasp of the poor ruined soul—ever trying and looking to, and hoping from, human contrivances, and human contrivances only? It is because you have faith in man's remedies, and not in God's. It is because you have faith in this or that clever man of the world, who has been successful, not in the LORD your God; you trust yourselves with a man, but not with CHRIST. I beseech you consider what is the true answer to the question even now, When I come shall I find faith on the earth? Why not begin, my brethren, to seek the kingdom of God? Why not hope that your SAVIOUR will provide for you in the way of righteousness? Why not consider, that if you be first His, "He Who clothes the grass of the field, will much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Or let us suppose again that any of us are slaves to sin—of sins which, alas! too easily beset us—of sins which we have renounced in intention, but never in deed—of sins which we know to be wrong, but which still are our masters. We think that we have faith in our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. But what does He say? "The soul which sinneth

it shall die ;” “ the wages of sin is death ;” “ except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” He is the eternal SON of the Highest,—“ GOD Who cannot lie.” He is “ *the truth*.” And He, every word of Whose lips is truth, says, “ If you sin you die ; if you do not repent you perish.” And we continue to sin, we do not repent. Can we believe in Him, or have any faith in what He says? We disobey, if we disobey, because we do not believe in Him, and are sceptical. We doubt what He says, we doubt that our sins will be followed by death, or that we need repentance ; we think the words are not meant ; we believe not then in CHRIST ; and whom *do* we believe? We believe him who beguileth us, as he beguiled Eve through his subtilty. We believe him who is CHRIST’S enemy and our own. We believe him who goeth about as a roaring lion, and dogs our steps, and waits his opportunities and repeats his assurances. For what does he tell us? “ Thou shalt *not* surely die ;” and we believe him. We, who think we have faith in CHRIST, believe this, and act upon this.

And from sin in general I might go into

detail and ask you to examine yourselves by those seven, which, because of their great enormity and more fatal consequences, are known, as deadly sins. One man is *proud*. How then can he have faith? He looks down on others, he is proud of his wealth, or ability or spiritual powers; and can he have any faith in CHRIST, Who says, "I am against thee, O thou proud"—"He that exalteth himself shall be abased?" Again He says, "Thou canst not serve God and Mammon." "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl." Have we here any faith at all in CHRIST? Are we at all convinced of the *truth* of what He says, that a man cannot serve God and Mammon too; that it is dangerous to be rich—often the heaviest misfortune—that a rich man shall with difficulty enter heaven? Is there upon the earth *much faith* in *these truths*? And so as to the other sins. If we believe the words of our LORD, that whosoever calleth "his brother 'fool' shall be in danger of hell fire;" why is there so much passion, so much anger, such fierce bitter words? why

are there such contentions and animosities between man and man, between brethren, between neighbours, in the same town, in the same family? It is, because we have no faith in these words; and though our Blessed LORD hath spoken them, we do not believe. So there are severe and awful words spoken against sloth, and gluttony, and luxury. The HOLY GHOST, by S. Paul, enumerates the works of the flesh, and what says He? "Of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Alas! do we believe this? Have we any faith in it? Why then indulge in them? How can we believe our LORD's assurance, that they will be attended with such fearful results; the loss of heaven and eternal happiness, the attainment of the undying fire and worm, and yet covet those results?

And are there not many sins of omission, my brethren, which can only be accounted for because faith is wanting? It cannot, I am afraid, be denied, that there are many persons in the world, to whom charity, in its lowest meaning, is unknown; who, like him in the parable, look upon their goods as their own,

and to whom it is most painful, nay, whose mind it never enters, to share them with others poorer than themselves; or to make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, by giving them to that God, Who returns a tenfold interest. But surely such have no faith or confidence in the words, spoken by the Spirit of CHRIST, "it is more blessed to give than to receive." No! such have no faith in this, for they think quite otherwise: that it is better to receive than give. And yet what is this but infidelity; I say not, infidelity in all truths, but infidelity in this truth,—that it is more blessed "to give than to receive:" and because this truth was spoken by CHRIST, it is disbelief in CHRIST. Again, can you believe, that when you give a drop of cold water, a piece of bread, or an unaccustomed comfort, to the sick and poor by your side, that you are in truth giving it to CHRIST; that He receives it as given to Him; that it is as though your Blessed LORD was before you, and you supplied Him with food? Why then do you not seek out the distressed? Why does any one pass by,—I speak not of them concerning whom there is a doubt, but of

those concerning whom there is *no* doubt,—the sufferer perhaps at the next door,—why do men pass by these, unfeelingly on the other side? Because they have no faith, because they have no thought that in helping them, they are, may I say so, doing a favour to CHRIST. The poor, He says, you have always with you, I leave them to be in My stead—"Forasmuch as ye have done it to one of these ye have done it unto Me."

And what faith have we in our SAVIOUR saying to us "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you;" "Your Heavenly FATHER will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him;" "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, He will give it you;" "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them;" "My House shall be called a house of prayer for all nations;" "Prayer shall be ever made unto Him, and daily shall He be praised:" What faith have we in these words, bidding us to prayer, public and private; bidding us pray daily, nay, hourly? What faith have we in these words, if we do *not* pray? Can we believe that there are any blessings attached to prayer,

and yet not pray? Can we believe that Almighty God hears every word we utter; that together *with* us and *in* us, the Holy Spirit intercedes, with groanings which cannot be uttered; that He gives meaning to, and interprets our unintelligible whispers; that He expands and enlarges our petitions, and grants what we never asked for; that in CHRIST'S Church we are not alone, though we seem alone, because we have "communion with the saints?" When we pray, there are other prayers and other intercessions going on of the good, in this world and the other; and by the union of our petitions, and by this blessed violence, we shall through the Blood of CHRIST be heard and answered. And yet is it not too true of many here, that you pray not, or pray coldly, or seldom? But why? Why do you *never* pray? or why do you pray feebly, and languidly and hesitatingly and unwillingly? Because your SAVIOUR is not believed when He says, "Whosoever asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

And if there be a great contrast between the *number* of communicants now, and in primitive times; if *then*, as Bishop Beveridge

informs us, those who went out of Church without communicating, were not reckoned among the number of Christians; whereas now the greater part seem to think, that the Communion is no part of Christianity, and that they may well enough live and die without it; if the difference be so great, to what is it owing, but the falling away of *faith*? It is because we have no faith in the absolute need of what our SAVIOUR gives us in the Holy Sacrament. We all confess that we are unable alone to meet the devil and the world; we confess, we know, we feel our weakness, and that we must have the strength of Almighty God. Well! what does the Church teach you? She teaches you that in the Holy Communion you have that strength. She teaches you that in the LORD'S Supper, you who come in a reverent spirit, with a contrite heart, and strong faith, receive not in figure, but verily, and indeed, the Body and Blood of your LORD, to this end, that it may be the strengthening and refreshing of your souls. Here then is your strength, here your refreshment, here the great feast, here the royal banquet, here inward life and power are to be attained. "If," the Church

again teaches in her Communion Service, "with a true penitent heart and lively *faith*, we receive that holy Sacrament, then we spiritually eat the flesh of CHRIST, and drink His Blood; then we dwell in CHRIST and CHRIST in us, we are one with CHRIST and CHRIST with us." And our blessed LORD Himself hath said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." It must be done then, we must eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, or we have no life in us. And on the other hand, "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." It must be done; but if it must be done, it is an anxious question, *when* and *where*? The Church answers in the above passage, when we go to the Holy Communion, "then we spiritually eat the flesh of CHRIST, and drink His blood." S. Paul answers in his Epistle to the Corinthians, "the *cup* which we *bless*, is it not the communion of the blood of CHRIST? the bread which we break, is it not the Communion," the communication, the making us partakers of the Body of CHRIST?

But who hath believed our report? and “all men have not faith;” and “when I come shall I find faith on the earth?” Faith shall be rare, faith shall be lodged in but one or two hearts comparatively, the thinly scattered and green spots of an unbelieving world. Faith shall be found perhaps in humble cottages, or amidst the deep poverty of dense and suffocating cities, and here and there, those who are of higher rank shall be translated to be kings and princes with CHRIST. But as a general rule, our REDEEMER’S words will apply, “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” How sad a consideration is this! How sad a consideration for us present, for how do we know that we have faith? How dare we remain listless and idle, unthoughtful and unexamining, when that rare, necessary thing may not be ours? Or when the faithful are so few, are we to take it for granted that we are of that number? To the first converts, it was the Apostle’s advice, “examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.” “Prove your own selves.” I have mentioned some points upon which you may examine yourselves, and by which you

may prove whether your faith be the faith of Abraham, the faith by which he offered his son in sacrifice.

Offer *thy* son in sacrifice, this is faith. Offer to God thy best, thy dearest, thy most beloved; offer thy sins, slay them with thy right hand, and shed their blood; offer thy affections, thy heart, thy love, thy desires; turn them from vain, unsatisfying things, turn them, as a stream to thy God. Offer *thyself* entirely, body, soul and spirit. Be absorbed and wrapped up in God, forget the world. And brethren, let it be *now*, for the time passeth. Now begin with some regularity the practices of devotion. Review at once your life, and say, I have wasted my time, I have done nothing, I am no way on my journey, I must begin, or CHRIST will come and find me unprepared. Remember that faith is patient under evil circumstances. Faith trusts in God. Faith subdues all sin, and purifies the heart, “purifying their hearts by faith.” Faith lies in the dust, and faith is full of alms-deeds, and faith stills the tongue, and brings low the temper; and faith looks for CHRIST’s coming, and prays that He will come. It is watchful, and careful, and earnest, and real;

believing in the rewards, and hoping to reach them ; hoping for that eternal glorious city which hath foundations, the builder and maker of which is God. This is faith, without which we cannot reach heaven. There is a false faith and a true faith ; be afraid of the false, seek the true ; there is a faith which will be to our condemnation, and there is one which bringeth salvation ; seek that which brings salvation. We are all inclined to idleness ; and because we ourselves wish it, (and a man is easily persuaded of what he wishes,) because I say, we ourselves wish it, and it falls in with our inclination, we are glad to accept that notion of faith, and to think that we shall be justified and pardoned by a faith which disturbs not our sloth, breaks not in upon our pleasures, makes it no sin to be covetous, and lets us live as we choose. This is the faith we love, this is the notion of faith to which we cling. But as surely, my brethren, as we are assembled together in the Church, so surely if this is the faith we possess, we shall be lost. The devils have it. All who *call* themselves Christians have it ; how then can it be *that* faith of which our LORD asks, When I come shall I

find it on the earth? How, if it be consistent with the way in which most of us live, can that way be called narrow, that path strait? How, if that which is generally thought to be faith, be truly so, are there so few who shall be saved? Remember once more, that all men have *not* faith. Remember our SAVIOUR, the Truth, says, it will be rare; and think about yourself, whether there be any thing in you so different from other people, as to justify the hope that you have entered, if it be no more, on the narrow way, and shall be at length among the few. O consider that the righteous shall scarcely be saved; and if so, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? where shall the mass of men appear, where shall we in the day of judgment, if, as an Apostle assures us, the righteous, the good, the devout, the pure shall scarcely be saved? God Almighty lead us to examine ourselves; God enable us to know ourselves; God in His mercy, for CHRIST's sake, increase our faith.

SERMON XII.

HOPE.

1 S. PETER I. 13.

“BE SOBER AND HOPE UNTO THE END FOR THE GRACE WHICH IS TO BE BROUGHT UNTO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

HOPE is mentioned in the text and in other parts of Scripture, as a distinct grace or virtue, which the Christian should cultivate.—“Hope unto the end for the grace which is to be brought unto you.” “Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three.” “We are saved by hope.” “Patience worketh experience and experience hope.” “Whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end.” These passages and many others, speak of Christian

hope as a very necessary grace, which we should both seek and retain. And it seems the more needful to dwell on this subject, because, unless I mistake, the grace of hope is very often confounded with faith. Hope is very different from faith in many respects, or the Apostle would not have mentioned them separately. "Faith, hope, charity, these three." Faith is one grace, charity a second, hope a third. But certainly two of these, in conversation and writings, are often mixed up in a strange confused manner, and faith, besides its own proper office, is made to usurp the office and work of hope.

I shall in this discourse, endeavour in the first place to point out the distinctions between hope and faith, and then to illustrate the workings of the former. "Hope unto the end."

1. Faith and hope differ as to their *extent*. Faith relates to *all* things which Almighty God has revealed in Scripture, bad as well as good; whereas hope has only to do with the *good* things of our Heavenly FATHER. Our SAVIOUR, for instance, has told you that there is a heaven and hell; that there are glorious rewards and fearful punishments;—

that there are unhappy lost spirits who may be your companions for ever and ever, or blessed angels. Now you believe all these things alike, the evil as well as good, but you only hope for the good among them. I repeat it: you equally believe that there is a heaven and hell. You do not dispute either of these facts; but you hope, by your own experience, to test the truth of only one of them, namely that there is a heaven. Here then is one great difference between faith and hope. Faith is that Divine gift, by which we receive as true every word of God. Faith looks at, accepts, and weighs, the bad and good, the dreadfulness of hell, and the joy of heaven. Hope contemplates the beautiful only, the good and desirable. Hope has no gloom, for it beholds only visions of joy. Hope is cheerful and lively, and its eyes ever beam with happiness, for they reflect the sunshine of a land whence all delight comes, and whose inhabitants keep an eternal festival: "Rejoicing in hope." Hope turns away from darkness, gazes on the light, and is "ever like the wing of an angel, soaring up to heaven."*

* Bishop Taylor.

2. Again: hope may be described as ever looking forward, and advancing from one blessed prospect to another, with its eyes bent upon God and the promises. But faith has to do with the present and past, as well as with the future. "Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." By faith we know the sin of our first parents, the loss of Eden, the change in our nature, the drowning of the world, and all the past events of sacred history. But what has hope to do with these things? Hope, as I have said, looks only to the future, expecting pardon and everlasting life.

3. Once more, there is this great difference between hope and faith; that faith has to do with certainty, hope with uncertainty. You believe with full assurance and it is a matter of faith that the righteous go to heaven. But that *you* individually are righteous, and shall finally go to heaven, is the subject of hope. You feel perfectly certain, that in the House of your God are many mansions, and that eye hath not seen nor ear heard the good things which God hath laid up for them that love Him; and yet that *you* shall possess

one of those mansions, or taste of those good things, can be only a matter of hope. You cannot attain them until you die ; up to that hour you must be content to hope for them. " Hope unto the end, for the grace which is to be brought unto you at the revelation of JESUS CHRIST."

It may be there are more distinctions between hope and faith, but these will suffice. By faith you accept *every* thing which the LORD has revealed, as certainly as if you saw it with your eyes. By hope you rest on the good, the desirable, the blessed things, and trust they will be yours. By faith you believe the fact that CHRIST is good and forgives the penitent ; but that He will be good to you, or that you are truly penitent, is your hope. To the question, did CHRIST die for your salvation ? the right answer is " I believe." To the question, will He save me ? the reply should be, " Such is my hope." " He that persevereth to the end shall be saved," this you believe. But that you yourselves shall persevere to the end, you are stedfastly to hope, though you cannot for certain tell until you are with God.

Now the great and absolute necessity of

this grace in your hearts will be at once evident, if you consider that it would interest you but little to be told of the felicities of heaven, had you no hope of ever attaining them. When you happen to read of princes and kings of the earth, of their royal appearance and great wealth, of their equipages and attendants, splendour and ambition, you at once feel that these things interest you but slightly, because they are so utterly beyond your reach ; when again you hear of Eastern magnificence, of marble palaces, diamonds and gold, and the luxurious vegetation of a tropical sun, you may wonder at the dazzling description, and your curiosity be in a manner gratified, still they are in truth, matters of indifference, because you cannot hope to attain them. And the facts of revelation may be true : it may be true that God's only SON has died for mankind, that it is the mission of the HOLY GHOST to bring men to heaven, that heaven is a place of inconceivable happiness ; these things may be true, and you may firmly believe them, and yet unless you have a good hope of yourselves attaining them, this your conviction cannot bring pleasure. The devils, in all

probability, dispute none of the facts of revelation : they believe and tremble : they know well enough the exceeding blessedness which God hath laid up for them that love Him : but alas ! they have no hope of being permitted to touch, even the lowest hem of His mercy, and therefore the prospect of that blessedness only deepens their anguish and misery. On the contrary, when the Christian has firmly fixed in his mind the gracious promises of the Gospel, and believes in the truth of them as God's Word ; then it is the hope, that he himself will have an interest in them, will be justified, sanctified, glorified, which sustains him in his temptations, and carries him on to victory. Hence it is said, " Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel ;" " By hope we are saved." Here it is affirmed that hope aids in our salvation. Now let us illustrate the force and power of hope by one or two examples.

Stories are told us of travellers journeying in other climes, who having wandered from their course, have by degrees found themselves involved in the intricacies of the wilderness without any probable chance of rescue. What so overwhelming as the feeling of

utter loneliness which must press on the heart, in the midst of eternal and unlimited sand ? Nothing above the head but the sky and sun, nothing but a desert around, still, silent, desolate, without a living thing. At such a time surely, a man may well give himself up as lost, and submissively lie down to perish. But there is a God beyond that sky and sun, Who has preserved men from worse dangers, and a hope springs up within his bosom, in the protection of that God. Hope cheers his soul, braces him to exertion, overcomes fatigue, and rescues from peril. By hope he is saved, against hope he believes in hope. He had no *certainty* of deliverance ; he could not be certain ; but his hope was of sufficient power, to make him persevere ; until he found the path, or was discovered by others and rescued.

When the wife of the mariner sits at home solitary, what sustains her soul, but the hope that all will be well. There can be no certain safety for him who is on the water ; nothing, as we know, is so variable and treacherous as the waves and wind. “ They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters, these see the works

of the LORD, and His wonders on the deep ; for at His Word the stormy wind ariseth and lifteth up the waves thereof. They are carried up to the heaven and down again to the deep : their soul melteth away because of their trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end." Such is the picture supplied by imagination, as the wind howls about her roof, and the white waves lash the shore. What will become of her fatherless children ? and yet a good hope gradually fills her breast, in the God Whose eye is upon the waters. Instead of being rendered incapable by despair, she is enabled to go about her duties in a trustful spirit, because she hopeth in Him, Who delivereth the seaman "from his distress," "Who maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they are at rest : and so He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be."

As the mother waits on her sickly child through the watches of the night, the same hope supports her. That child may be waning day after day, and every instant of time be drawing nearer dissolution. Yet she enter-

tains hope, she will not acknowledge that the star is sinking, or that the shadow of death is gradually obscuring its brightness. And it is well that it should be so. This hope is a divine gift, which enables her to bear up under sorrow.

When the prodigal child of God, like him in the parable, comes to himself and remembers his transgressions; when he calls to mind how, in spite of vows and promises, he has passed his time in riotous living, and eaten the husks of sin; what is to bring him to the feet of Almighty God but the hope of pardon? Under what impressions can he be induced to repent and turn from his wickedness that he hath committed, but from that feeling of hope and expectation which gave rise to the words—"I will arise and go to my FATHER, and will say unto Him, FATHER, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son?" But for hope, he would certainly abandon every effort at change, and plunge the deeper into libertine excesses. But God calls him from a distance: he beholds the FATHER ready to clasp in His arms the son who was dead, but is alive again; was

lost, and is found ; and the hope that he may yet be accepted, if only to the post of an “hired servant,” is the beginning of a new life, and the first movement towards happiness.

When the Christian soldier has taken his oath of service to JESUS CHRIST, and calmly considers the duties which are necessary to his reward, and that he has to renounce the devil, maintain the articles of the faith, and observe the commandments of his Leader ; when he thinks of the enemies who encompass him under the direction of him who beguiled Eve by his subtilty, and of his own frailness, his irresolute will, ungoverned appetites and alienated affections ; when he reflects on the words of his Master, “ Watch and pray ”—of S. Paul, “ Be stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD ; ” “ He that is in CHRIST hath crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,” “ teaching us that the denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world ; ” when he has pondered these things, what can lead him to the contest, and keep him undismayed ? What can make him

persevere and still fight on under discouragement and loss? What can cause him to rise again after wounds and defeat, and finally prevail? What but a sure and certain hope of CHRIST'S continued assistance? The words, "My Grace is sufficient for thee," "I can do all things through CHRIST, Who strengtheneth me," "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation," fill him with hope.

Lastly. There is a moment, if possible more trying than all, when hope is the stay and anchor of the tossed soul. It is in that fevered hour when even the most saintly may look forward with something of dread, to the departure from earth. Weeping friends are standing by, anguish and pain distract the body, the possessions or pleasures which were his in the present world are passing away, and what is to cheer him under their loss? Even amidst the pallor of death, and the faint moisture which damps his brow, he lifts his languid eyes towards heaven with a hope full of immortality. "In hope of eternal life, which God Who cannot lie promised before the world began;" my flesh, he thinks within himself, "shall rest in

hope ;” “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; Thou wilt show me the path of life : in Thy presence is fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.”

The man who thus expires, with that hope in his soul which hath led to the purifying himself even as God is pure, shall not be disappointed. Earthly hopes may, and in a great measure must, disappoint. Very often they are not attained ; and still more frequently when attained, they are not what we imagined. They are like those sun-lit gorgeous clouds, so magnificent from afar, which upon our nearer approach, are found to be mist only and driving vapour. And it is right that this should be so, and our earthly hopes in a measure disappoint ; otherwise we should lingeringly fix our habitations here, and doat upon mortality. But the hope in heavenly things “maketh not ashamed,” that is, does not disappoint. The joys upon which that hope is fixed are unfading, incorruptible, and beyond our loftiest expectations ; “which God Who cannot lie promised before the world began.” Therefore, in Scripture phrase, “ye prisoners of hope,” whilst tied and restricted to the earth, hope still in God ; try

to please Him. Ever, day and night make this your rule, to please God ; and then in danger and safety, in trouble and joy, in strength and weakness, in life and death, “hope unto the end for the grace which is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST.”

SERMON XIII.

CHARITY.

1 COR. XIII. 4.

“CHARITY SUFFERETH LONG AND IS KIND : CHARITY
ENVIETH NOT : CHARITY VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF,
IS NOT PUFFED UP.”

It requires but small argument to prove, that charity, or the love of our brethren, is a grace and virtue incumbent upon Christians. What words, for example, are so imperative and solemn as those of a kind friend who will shortly leave us ? If there be any thing of consequence, or any special wish of his own, which he thinks of great value to us, he will at that time make it known, and lay upon us his commands. Now, on the evening before His departure, our LORD gave an

injunction to His disciples : " This new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." And not only did our REDEEMER give this command upon the eve of His departure from the world, but He also gave it to be the distinguishing mark of His followers, " By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have *love* one to another." Now that which is to distinguish one body of men from another is surely of great consequence ; that which, amidst the turbulence of the heathen world, the quarrels and animosities of those who know not God, the wars and fightings of unsanctified human nature, the strife of kings, and the passions of the people, should mark off and separate, as in another Goshen, the flock of CHRIST, is to be sought by us all. And then if we consider how often this command is repeated, " This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you ;" how we find it enforced by all the Scripture writers, but especially by S. John, " Beloved, let us love one another ; he that loveth his brother abideth in light ;" " If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another : if a man

say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar ;” “ This commandment have we from God, that he who loveth God love his brother also ;”—if, I say, we consider how often this subject is brought before us, we cannot fail to be impressed with the importance of Christian love.

3. We may be permitted for a moment to draw on the imagination, for the picture of a society governed by love. Such a society, but for man’s corruption, might exist, and there is ample room for its existence in the principles of our holy religion carried out and practised. Conceive then that great company, of which we speak in the *Te Deum*, and a belief in which is an article of the faith, the Catholic Church, united. Conceive every where the same faith and the same practice. Conceive yourselves going from one city to another, from one country to another, poor and a stranger, yet received to hospitality because you belong to CHRIST. Conceive the whole body sympathizing with each part, in its sufferings or its triumphs. It may never be our lot to behold this glorious vision, save as disembodied spirits, or spectators from the world unseen, but there are manifold indica-

tions of such a body, in Scripture, fastened together by the cords of love. Thus we read of one body animated by one Spirit ; of one flock under one Shepherd ; of one mind and one heart among the early disciples ; of one mighty and vast kingdom governed by a single Sovereign. "When the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the young lion and the fatling together, they shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain."

And in such a society, governed by the Holy Spirit of love, that is, the Spirit of CHRIST, what must be the temper of individuals,—how calm and uncomplaining—how meek and patient—how gentle and forbearing. Charity suffereth long and is kind, charity envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. How many heartburnings and injuries, what evil surmisings and fretfulness should we be spared did charity prevail. With what confidence should we meet every one and part from every one, if we were quite sure there would be no unkind speeches, and no advantage taken when we left them. How would all business be trans-

acted fairly and openly between man and man, if there were that love "which seeketh not her own." How few bitter words and quarrels would there be if we had that within us, which "is not easily provoked," "which beareth all things, endureth all things." How few ambitious, vain people would there be, if all had that grace which "vaunteth not itself." Or would any be offensive, violent, and rude, with that virtue in their hearts, "which doth not behave itself unseemly?"

It must be confessed that the disposition and practice of Christians are very much opposed to the command of their Master CHRIST, and to the principles of His religion. I will not now dwell on the fact, that for unanimity there are divisions, for love, enmity and strife, for words of peace quarrels, and that instead of desiring the public good, we are apt to secure only our private interests. These things are too obvious to require proof; I will, therefore, on the present occasion, point out to you what appear to be some of the hindrances to Christian love, and to those states of heart or disposition which manifestly impede the growth of charity.

The first reason why we do not love our brethren in CHRIST seems to be, that we do not sufficiently apprehend our relationship, or feel that they are in truth our brethren. We have been all taken out of the world, and engrafted into one body, the Church of CHRIST ; we have been all taught the same faith, we use the same prayers, we have the same hope and blissful land before us ; and whatever strength we have either to fight against the devil, perform our daily work, or take up the ways of piety, comes down upon each of us from our common Head, Who sitteth in heaven in glory and majesty ;—so that we are all, one great spiritual family, interested most deeply one in another, as nearly related as the hand is to the foot, of the same body, and all of us together one, in JESUS CHRIST. And thus, in a right state of things, what the Apostle has mentioned would follow : “ Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” But I would ask you to weigh those words, and consider whether there be among us any such feeling. Do we sympathise with the sufferings of our fellow

Christians, or hasten to relieve them?—do we grieve when they grieve, and rejoice when they rejoice? Do we not rather say, “Am I my brother’s keeper? what are his sufferings to me? I know him not; I have no acquaintance with him. It is true that we come together in the same Church, we see each other’s faces, we use together the inspired language of Prophets and Apostles; but he has no claim upon me whatever; he is a stranger.” Not so, my brethren; not so, if you rightly estimated your relationship, and considered that all we are brethren, all of us the children of God, all the members of JESUS CHRIST, all alike inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. And as by the ties of earthly relationship you are bound to be kind to father or mother, to children or brothers; so by the ties of Heaven, the bond of the Spirit, and the command of CHRIST, are you bound to the whole Christian family. “Beloved, let us love one another.” There are now, indeed, great differences between us here on earth. Some are born to a goodly heritage, some to poverty; some to a life of comparative joy, and others to sorrow. But we must dis-

regard these distinctions ; pay we the respect which is their due to wealth and to greatness ;—for the present world, for its due government, and the training souls to glory, God has seen fit that there shall be ranks and degrees among men, and we are to pay them honour ; but these things must not dazzle our eyes, or make us forget that it is only a present arrangement ; they must not cause us to pass by as too obscure, and as of a different race, our suffering brother or poor sister ;—for we shall all of us meet in heaven, we shall meet at the bar of judgment. No differences will there be then but the differences of piety ; the rich robe of the earth will be laid aside, and wealth and dignity will be nought ; and instead thereof will be assumed by the pious the robe which the Lamb gives, and the crowns of heaven ; the poor man by your side, the humble person you have scorned, the unoffending one you have ridiculed, the guiltless person you have slandered, the sick you have refused to relieve, the naked you would not clothe,—behold them now on the right hand of JESUS CHRIST, kings and priests for ever. Happy if they would only now call you “ brother,”

and JESUS CHRIST would say, "forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these ye have done it unto Me;" for when upon earth you considered your responsibilities, you were not deceived by the illusions of the world, you put aside its distinctions, and with the eye of faith you have followed My commandment in loving and doing good to your brethren. This is one reason why we do not love our brethren, "it is not sufficiently realized that they *are* such."

But if any one shall say, although this may be the case with others, it is not with me, "for I fully acknowledge the obligation which is laid upon me by CHRIST;" yet there is another obstacle, which, when we know what is right, hinders our doing it. This second impediment is our *selfishness*: for suppose a brother offend you—suppose he speaks insultingly to you—suppose he steps in between you and good fortune—what would follow did you love him? "Charity envieth not; charity endureth all things; charity answereth not again—doth not reply to provocation, and thinketh another better than itself." But you, perhaps, do quite otherwise: you are provoked, you answer wrath-

fully, you take vengeance ; and all because you think of yourself more highly than you ought to think ; that self-importance which you so cherish has been hurt and roughly treated, and you would make your brother feel it. Thus selfishness destroys love ; thus we have so many quarrels, public and domestic, because each must vindicate his importance. None have any self-denial ; none can refrain ; none can hush the fierce tongue, or still the beating heart ; none will be inferior, or give way, or be silent, or return blessing for railing, or good for evil. Self is each man's God : but you cannot serve two Gods. One or other of them you must abjure ; you cannot at the same time be absorbed in self-adulation, and in what you owe to CHRIST and your brother. CHRIST Himself hath said so. " Except a man deny *himself*, he cannot be My disciple ;" and it is because this self-homage is so dangerous, that so much is said of denying it in Scripture. If your eyes are ever upon the ground, can they behold the glorious sun ; if thy love is spent upon thyself, can it spread abroad to thy neighbour, or thy God ? But the HOLY GHOST tells us, that we must not

love ourselves in this way : we must think little of ourselves, humble ourselves, make ourselves the last, and take the lowest place. Instead of thus loving ourselves, we are rather to have shame and sorrow for our many imperfections and daily sins ; and when the love of self hath ceased, the love of our brother will expand, as plants stopped in one direction break forth in another. May we be on our guard against self-love, so great an enemy to our salvation. “ Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” The second cause why we love not our brother—we love ourselves too much, and are selfish.

There is a third great impediment—our *indolence*. I suppose many of us *know* what we owe to our brethren, which was the *first* hindrance. Some of us, I trust, can look kindly upon others, and be even patient under their reproach, through the grace of God, because we have overcome that imperious absorbing love of self, which was the *second* hindrance. Yet there is a *third*. We may fall short of what we owe to our brother, from mere indolence and sloth. S. James inquires of us, “ If a brother or sister be naked and

destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled ; notwithstanding ye *give* them not those things which are needful for the body, what doth it profit ?” Yet this sort of thing often happens. You have a neighbour who falls ill ; a little help will benefit him ; you have dependants about you who have given you their time and labour, and are now in distress : there are children to be schooled, clothed, and fed, or great sufferings will follow. All this you know, and that it is your place to help them ; and, indeed, it is your full purpose to do so ; but, alas ! inactivity steps in, and the thing is either never done at all, or it is done badly, and too late. Possibly death ; it may be crime ; certainly much suffering has been the result ; not of your ignorance, nor quite of your selfishness, for you would have freely given, but of that sad inactivity, which, whilst you intended the best, suffered you not to do it. Had they come to your house, they were welcome. You are not one of those, wrapped up in utter selfishness, who say “ what is my brother to me ?” But neither are you like Job, who said of himself, “ I was a father to the

poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out." "It is a part of true religion," S. James says, "to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction." And little do those people know of their own necessities, or the loss which they undergo, who remain in ignorance and stand aloof all their lives from the unhappiness of their fellows: for if men have eyes to see, it is by beholding others suffer that we know what ourselves may come to; it is by beholding their wants and privations that we are made thankful to God for our own estate; it is by seeing their tears that our hearts are touched, and softened and made human; and it is by contemplating death, that we prepare for our own departure. But indolence will not be pained or behold any of these things; and, therefore, it becomes hard and unsympathising with sorrow. The last cause why we love not our brother—our indolence impedes us.

And if you ask what ill consequence will follow from your suffering these impediments to prevail, the answer is, you will offend and drive from you the Holy Spirit of God. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not knoweth

not God, for God is love." When you resist the secret impulse to assist a poor brother ; when you give no heed to the voice which whispers that you have been unkind, or envious, or angry without cause ; when you create and foster divisions in God's Church, or among your neighbours ; when in your own family you are otherwise than forbearing ; be assured that you are offending the Spirit of concord, the Spirit of love. God is Love, the Fountain from whence love flows ; and as we are filled with love, we are filled with God. God descends upon His people, and instils His own Divine virtue, and draws them thereby into one holy brotherhood, and unites them unto Himself. " Every one who loveth is born of God." On the other hand, if we will not give place to His suggestions, but continue hard-hearted and unkind, full of strife and envy, we cannot be one with God. God will have no part with us ; His Spirit rejects us, as persons who cannot coalesce, or be cemented into, that great family of angels and saints, whose bond is love. Ah ! if we drive the Spirit from us, we drive God from us ; and if we drive God from us, we

leave nought for ourselves but an enduring wretchedness.

In conclusion, then, my brethren, how can we best stir up in ourselves the Divine Spirit which is of such importance, and how most readily can we carry it into practice?

With regard to the former of these, I would ask you to set before your eyes that Holy REDEEMER, Who, as He hath given us an example in all other things, so hath He especially in this grace of love. The sacred writers delight to dwell on the many instances of our SAVIOUR's love. His love for us in taking flesh, His love in becoming poor, His love in bearing contumely, His dying for His enemies ;—"greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." We always read in the lives of the Saints, that they became in great measure what they were by contemplating CHRIST ; by contemplating Him in His life and actions day by day, and trying to walk in His footprints, though at a long distance and unequally. Thus they came by degrees to put on CHRIST, and be transformed into His image, because they had Him continually before their eyes. If you dwell for long in

any particular society, and with one set of persons, you naturally fall into their ways of thought and action ; and if CHRIST be your daily companion, and His life your study, you cannot but be touched and wrought upon by His example ; you will dislike what He disliked, such as malice and unkindness ; and you will feel that as CHRIST loved us, so should we also love one another. This, then, is the first rule I give you for promoting love : contemplate CHRIST's love, contemplate *Him* in the details of it Who is love, the Fountain from which it must come down, the Source to which it must ascend. Read, and as you read ask your own heart a question, Do I walk by this rule—is this like *me* ? When, for example, you are tempted in any particular manner, to violate the law of love, observe your SAVIOUR in like circumstance. You return to your brother railing for railing—did CHRIST so ? When accused was He not silent ?—when smitten was He not patient ? You pass with a cold eye your perishing brother—hath He not given you the parable of the good Samaritan, and the fearful one of Lazarus ? and did He not go without meat or drink, and travel

long journeys on foot, to heal the leper and the blind, and to raise the dead? To what end do you think our LORD's life is given to us at length, by four several writers, if it be not, in Scripture words, that He hath given us an example therein that we should walk in His steps? Are the Gospels but a storehouse for disputes, and not a manual for our daily life? Are they but to inform the head, not renovate the heart? Are they to make us only wiser, not better than before? God forbid. Contemplate and try to walk in the steps of CHRIST—the first rule for attaining love.

And when you have resolved to do good like your LORD, and have prayed for that grace which enables you to do it, remember that the field of labour is not far off. You have all homes, and relatives, and neighbours. God Almighty hath so arranged it, that we should each of us be placed in our own circle, with opportunities to exercise the charities of the Gospel. "We are to begin with loving our friends about us, and gradually to enlarge the circle of our affections, till it reaches all Christians, and then all men." I mention this, lest you should suppose when love is

mentioned that we are talking of some high subject—something out of your reach, and only to be exercised by those who form schemes for extensive benevolence. Not so. Around your doors, within your houses, are the objects towards whom you may exercise love. Love is called forth, there is room and a demand for it, almost every moment of your life. If there be a happy family, it is because love is among them; if there be a peaceful neighbourhood, it is because love is there. My brethren, love one another. With CHRIST's word upon your lips, with CHRIST's example before your eyes, and with CHRIST's Spirit empowering your hearts, exercise love; First in your own families, forbear and suffer, and be kind, and be not easily provoked. From thence go out of doors, and be kind to your poor brother, and help if you can your neighbour, and do good to your enemy; Thence let your love go forth to your fellow Christians, and to all men. Finally, do not forget those who are gone; for the living and the dead are one in CHRIST. And thus by loving here you will be prepared for eternity, since much love is wanted in heaven: here it is but a languid flame, burn-

ing—how low—at intervals ; there it will be fresh kindled by the Blessed Trinity, for God is love ; here you seldom meet with it, there is its native home, where it endureth. All the Angels and all the Saints (may we be of them !) are bound to one another by that which is the cement of the Universe ; they are wrought into one unanimous family by God, and “God is love.”

SERMON XIV.

CHRIST'S BAPTISM AND OURS.

S. MATTHEW III. 16.

“AND JESUS WHEN HE WAS BAPTIZED WENT UP STRAIGHTWAY OUT OF THE WATER, AND LO THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED UNTO HIM, AND HE SAW THE SPIRIT OF GOD DESCENDING LIKE A DOVE, AND LIGHTING UPON HIM.”

At this time of the year we commemorate the early events of our Lord's history. This is the period of His Epiphany, or manifestation to the world. Up to this time, with one exception, He hath lain concealed or hidden from sight. He came forth as a child of twelve years old, and appeared openly in the Temple ; and the Doctors and wise men were astonished at His understanding and answers. The star of Jacob, the light come into the

world, the Wisdom of God, the Sun of righteousness, shone out for a moment and then retired, not to appear again until He had numbered thirty years. That time is now arrived, and in the Gospel for the day we have His first miracle, and in the text His public manifestation as the world's SAVIOUR and God's SON.

The events which took place on this occasion are important and worth considering.

A very remarkable person had lately appeared, in the person of John the Baptist. He was a man of singular appearance and austere manners. He dwelt not in cities, but in the wilderness ; he associated not with mankind, but with the wild beasts ; he partook not of ordinary food, but his meat was locusts and wild honey ; he did not even clothe himself like other men, but the hair of the camel was his raiment, and a leather girdle was about his loins. Added to this, he brought them stirring news. "The kingdom of heaven," he said, "is nigh at hand." You must repent ; you must make ready, by casting away your sins. "Behold, the axe is laid to the root of the tree. Behold ! every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is

hewn down and cast into the fire. I proclaim to you Him, Whose fan is in His hand, Who will thoroughly purge His floor, and will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." What wonder that people flocked to him from all parts, and were "baptized of him in Jordan confessing their sins."

We can understand very well why "a generation of vipers," on hearing this fearful news, should come to John the Baptist, and do whatever he told them; we can see why they should be baptized, as an engagement that they would from that time repent of their sins, and by a new life be ready for the kingdom of heaven, which was nigh at hand. But behold "JESUS CHRIST come from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him." What does this mean? was He like them? had He to repent?

1. We know that JESUS had no sin; this, therefore, could not be the reason why He came to John the Baptist. He had no occasion to confess His sins, or repent like the others, because He had no sin to acknowledge, or of which to repent. He, indeed, took our nature upon Him; but in taking it, He so purified it as to be without sin. In

everything else He was like ourselves, with this exception, that He had no sin ; or, to put it in another way, He indeed took our nature, but He did not take that which is not our nature properly but only a corruption of it, and an accident, sin. The first Adam had our nature without sin, and sin was a corruption of it—an accident, a disease which he afterwards contracted. Every man descended naturally from Adam inherits the disease ; nevertheless, it is not a part of our nature, but a corruption, and may be separated from it. The Second Adam took our flesh divested of this corruption, and so was worthy to begin a new race ; for He, like the first Adam, was without sin. “He did no sin,” writes S. Peter, “neither was guile found in His mouth.” And the words of John imply thus much : “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me ? Why dost Thou come to me ? Thou art not a sinner ; Thou needest not to repent. I indeed have need of Thy baptism ; but why comest Thou to mine ?”

Our Blessed LORD came to John's Baptism for several reasons. One reason is stated in these words : “Suffer it to be so

now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." In other words, "It is right to comply with every ordinance and commandment of God." This is the meaning of "all righteousness," every institution of God. For this reason He was circumcised : for this reason He was baptized. Neither the one nor the other was required for Him as they were for other men : they could be of no use or benefit to Him Who possessed all things and was without spot : but He had undertaken to accomplish every tittle and jot of His FATHER'S will, and therefore He said, "Suffer it to be so now, it thus becometh Me to do."

There are, of course, other reasons why such things as prayer, and assembling together, and the divine Sacraments, and other like matters, are to be observed by Christians ; they bring to us actual benefits, they are the means of grace, they are our communications with the world unseen, the bridge which spans the gulf between heaven and earth, the ladder by which angels rise and fall ; but were they not all these they are commanded by God ; and this is enough for a disciple ; this is enough for him who would

follow his SAVIOUR, and has the same heart and mind which was in CHRIST JESUS. The reason of an injunction, the full depth of a mystery, the necessity of a doctrine, we may not always understand ; but we can understand that a thing is commanded by our LORD, and fulfil all righteousness.

It was not, however, merely to fulfil all righteousness that our SAVIOUR was baptized. His ministry was now about to commence, and it was the design of heaven to make a public announcement of it to the world. Here in the wilderness, by the side of Jordan, multitudes were assembled, for they had come from all the neighbouring countries to hear the wonderful Preacher, and here in so vast an assemblage was a fit occasion for the manifestation of CHRIST ; here, before so many witnesses, it was right to make it known that He was called of GOD, as was Aaron, and did not take this honour to Himself ; and that He came with the FATHER'S authority, to recover mankind from the snares of the devil. He, like all the rest, went down into the water. They thought Him, doubtless, like one of themselves, come to confess His sins and to repent. But what

happened to make them, on their return; marvel and ponder? Lo the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

What is the first point in this great miracle? Behold, they see the heavens open; they perceive the clouds to be cloven and divided asunder, and are able to look into their deep and hidden recesses; and what was the lesson conveyed to them by this circumstance? Surely that heaven, its joys, its eternal delights, its peace and quiet and blessedness, were again thrown open to mankind. Remember the words of the *Te Deum*, "He hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." This was the great truth thus visibly taught: *That* Man, that poor Man, that Man without a resting place, was about to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. "For all men," says the Apostle, "had sinned and come short of the glory of God." "We have proved," he says, "both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin." On this account, then, because that

all were sinners heaven was shut against all. "So He drove out the man : and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword, turning every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." He drove out man, and ever since man hath been excluded from Paradise. CHRIST, indeed, if I may so speak, all through the Old Testament, in virtue of the sacrifice to come, hath in a more private and reserved manner admitted the faithful to happiness ; but now for the first time He hath flung the gates wide open, and publicly announced reconciliation to the world. "Peace, peace, He says to them that are far off, and to them that are nigh." "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it." "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession."

But now what was the next point in this great miracle ? "The heavens opened :" and what followed ? "The Spirit of God descending, like a dove, and lighting upon Him." This was the great sign by which John the

Baptist was to discover the SON of GOD. "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him ; and I knew Him not : but He that sent Me to baptize with water, the same said unto Me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him ; the same is He Which baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST. And I saw and bare record that this is the SON of GOD." Observe, the Spirit of God descended visibly on CHRIST : He was seen ; He, though a Spirit, assumed a bodily form, that people might know CHRIST would baptize His disciples with the Spirit, with that Spirit Which had now alighted upon Him, and abode with Him : " the same is He Which baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST." CHRIST, then, even in His Manhood, hath the Spirit in all fulness to bestow on His people ; for " God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him, and of His fulness have all we received." And whosoever is incorporated into CHRIST ; whosoever is one with CHRIST, is a partaker of this Spirit ; for " if a man have not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of His." Behold, then, CHRIST marked out and distinguished from all the rest by the

visible descent of the HOLY GHOST. Behold this seal and authorization upon Him. Nor yet was the HOLY GHOST given Him, without measure and without limit, for Himself only, but for you, that you may partake of Him—that you may be enlightened, renewed, strengthened, made holy—that you may be empowered against the devil, against the world, against the flesh, and take your seat in the skies with God.

I said the HOLY GHOST assumed a bodily form; for He you know is a Spirit, and a spirit must assume a shape and form if He would be seen of men. You cannot see the wind, nor your own soul; you cannot see the angels nor God. God, if He would be seen of men, must accommodate Himself to men, and assume a form and shape. The HOLY GHOST appeared at this time as a dove, and not without meaning. Indeed, whenever He made Himself visible to men He appears to have taken that form, which signified and taught the present purpose of His coming, which indicated what He came for, and what He was about to do. He came on the Day of Pentecost to make the Apostles eloquent, and therefore He took the form of tongues;

He came to make them speak divine languages, and therefore the tongues were cloven; He came to fill them with vehement energy, to consume by their preaching the idolatry and sins of the world, and therefore the tongues were "of *fire*." But now at this time He, the third Person in the mysterious Trinity, came to co-operate with the second in proclaiming to the world peace, reconciliation, love, and oneness. What so gentle as the dove? what so peaceful? what so averse to war, and so much delighting in quietness and rest? Surely a fit emblem of that which was at this time proclaimed, "Peace and good will to mankind."

Once before the dove was selected as the Harbinger of Peace. It was when the earth had been covered with water, and every living substance was destroyed, "both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of heaven." Then the dove brought back in her mouth an olive leaf to Noah, in token that the waters had abated, and God's wrath was gone. We are apt to talk carelessly of this or that being an accident, and falling out by chance; but there is no such thing as chance. If the hairs of

your head are all numbered ; if not one of them can fall to the ground without God's permission, then doubtless the selection of the dove in the time of Noah was providential, and set forth beforehand this remarkable visit of the HOLY GHOST.

But the miracle is not yet over : for lo, a voice from heaven, saying, " This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased." Thus, then, the appearance of the SON of God in the world was plainly made known. The descent of the HOLY GHOST upon His Head was a great thing : it satisfied John the Baptist. " I knew Him not : but He that sent Me to baptize with water, the same said to me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He Which baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST : and I saw and bare record, that *this* is the SON of God." This satisfied John the Baptist ; but the Almighty FATHER would have others satisfied. He would take away from them all excuse ; therefore He Himself spake from heaven, " This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased."

Thus, then, was the second object of our LORD's coming to John's baptism accom-

plished—the public announcement of Him by a voice from heaven to the world as God's SON; and the public consecration of Him to the office of SAVIOUR and Mediator, by the HOLY GHOST.

I need hardly point out to you that here, as in every other deed of the ALMIGHTY, all the three Persons of the Divine Trinity took a part. As the blessed SON ascended from the water the HOLY SPIRIT came down, and the FATHER spake. The great mystery of the Godhead, incomprehensible to man, because, as there are things real and existent, which our eyes are powerless to see; so are there things, and if anything, surely the manner of God's existence, which our minds have not the power to grasp: the mystery of the Godhead, then, in a manner suitable to man's apprehension and weakness, was on this occasion set forth; and it was shown that there is one Person of the FATHER, another of the SON, another of the HOLY GHOST—that the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity, is to be worshipped.

But although our LORD JESUS CHRIST had thus fulfilled all righteousness, and been manifested to the Jews as God's beloved

SON and the consecrated of the HOLY GHOST, these were not His only objects in coming to John the Baptist. He had another object—an object to be borne in mind as a principle in Holy Scripture. “He hath given us an example that we should walk in His steps.” He came into the world, among other things, to be our Teacher ; and He taught not only by word but by deed. He taught by His *actions* as well as by His words ; and, therefore, whenever we read of our blessed LORD’s doing anything, we shall generally find that He thereby conveys to us a lesson ; and teaches us what, under a like circumstance, shall happen to ourselves, or what in a similar case we must do. Let me remind you of a single instance. The Holy JESUS had observed symptoms of pride in His Apostles ; He wished to teach them humility. How did He set about it ? He took a little child and set in the midst of them : thus He taught them by an *action*. He took a towel, and a bason and water, and washed their feet : thus He taught them by an *action*. Now to apply this to the present case.

1. By His own conduct and example He hath given you a lesson, that you should

fulfil "all righteousness," that is, you should follow with all your heart, and soul, and strength, what you know to be His will. CHRIST, by His conduct, sets down as utterly wrong and faulty that niggardly spirit which would confine and cramp the services we owe to God, and reduce what a Christian must believe, or what he must do to the smallest possible limit, and on the plea of simplifying the Gospel, deduct from its requirements. He would have us take an enlarged view of Holy Scripture, as the will and commandment of Him Who died for our souls ; Who loves us with an eternal love ; Who would not have us perish ; and Who has given us there nothing which is needless. He would have us search in order to find ; He would have us find in order to do ; and He would have us not refuse this, or repudiate that, because of our own fancy or dislike, but accept both doctrines and practices in their obvious meaning, and, in as far as we may, to fulfil all righteousness. Thus it is that love doeth. Say what people will, devoted love does, as a matter of fact, endeavour to fulfil all righteousness. It would rather exceed than fall short. It would

to the utmost walk with CHRIST; it would go where the Lamb goeth; follow where the Lamb commandeth, and believe whatever the "voice from heaven speaketh," because that voice from heaven is the voice of a sure Friend, Who hath given His SON to be the propitiation for our sins.

2. Moreover our SAVIOUR, Who by way of commencing his public ministry as the beginning and Head of the Church, thought it necessary to be baptized, hath thereby taught us the truth that thus also *we* must *begin* to be His disciples. But I need not insist upon this truth. You all know that baptism is the way into the Church: that CHRIST expressly commanded His Apostles, "Go and baptize all nations:" that except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God; that though children are born in a state of sin and condemnation, yet it is certain by God's Word that children who have been baptized, dying before they have committed actual sin, are undoubtedly saved; and, finally, that by baptism we are made the members of CHRIST, and the inheritors of heaven.

3. And as it was when He ascended out

of the water that the HOLY GHOST fell on our SAVIOUR, so He teaches us to believe, what His Church hath ever believed and taught, that in the sacrament ordained by Him, whosoever is baptized with water is baptized likewise with the HOLY GHOST ; then the HOLY GHOST falls on us ; then He applies the blood of CHRIST and washes sin from our souls ; then He enables us to do what we cannot do naturally ; then He gives us a supernatural, divine and new power ; then He incorporates us into the Body, inserts and engraffeth us into the stem of the Vine, and causes us, instead of the weakness and degeneracy of the Old Adam, in which we were born, to partake of the nature, strength, and virtues of the Second Adam, of Whom we are born again ; Who took our flesh, Who thereby sanctified it, and Who communicates of that sanctification to all who are made one with Him ; and so is the Head and beginning, and Founder and Origin, Himself their Creator, and yet the root from which they spring of a new race and family, His people and Church.

And remember, that if there is any difference between the baptism of John the Bap-

tist and the baptism of CHRIST, this is the main and principal difference, "I, indeed," says John, "baptize with water, that is, with water only; but this is He Who baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST in addition." This is the difference between Christian baptism and that of John: that the former is accompanied by the HOLY GHOST, the other not. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit," says our SAVIOUR, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," that is, the kingdom which I preach, which I am about to form; "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the Name of the LORD JESUS, and by the *Spirit* of our God;" "We are all baptized by one Spirit." Here the Spirit is invariably mentioned as our Baptizer. There *may*, then, for what I know, be a baptism unaccompanied by the Spirit; indeed, it is very likely that there are such baptisms, when those baptize who have no faith in the healing virtue of the Sacrament, and who look not for the Spirit; but then I know that this is not *Christian* baptism. It is John's baptism, for he baptized with water only; it is the Jews' baptism, for they baptize with water only; but it is not Christian baptism,

for the very object of that baptism is to bestow the HOLY GHOST. "This is He Which baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST."

4. And yet another thing is to be remembered : that in Christian baptism we are made the sons of God. "A voice was heard from heaven, saying, This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased." This same voice is heard by the ear of faith, by the soul which relies on the promises of God, whenever a child is baptized. "This," says the ALMIGHTY, "is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased." Not, of course, in the same sense in which the Holy JESUS was His SON—not His son by nature, not of the same substance with Him, begotten before the worlds ; but this is My son, for I have forgiven him, cleansed him, sanctified and taken him as an adopted one into My family ; and now if from henceforth he be a dutiful son, he shall have all that I can give him—My protection, My guidance, and by and by eternal life. "We are made," the Catechism says, "the children of God." "Beloved," cries the Apostle, "now are we the sons of God."

Behold, then, my brethren, what privileges

are ours. Heaven has been opened to all believers; the HOLY GHOST has come down upon us; we have been made God's children. This is an act of grace, an act of favour; let us try to return it; let us reflect on the great goodness of God to us miserable sinners; let us think on the great honour that is done us. From being the children of Adam we are made the sons of God; from being weak, corruptible, and lost, we may, if we truly desire it, be made strong and immortal, and the redeemed of heaven. And this, remember, may be the condition of all—of the poorest, of the most ignoble; he may be a king in heaven. Act, then, the part of sons: be dutiful to your Heavenly FATHER; love Him with all your might; *obey* Him; “for if a man love Me he will keep My commandments.” Obey Him by restraining your passions, by checking bad thoughts, by ruling the tongue, by paying Him service, by thinking of Him before you act, and doing what you do to the glory of God; and then obey God, likewise, by loving your neighbour, for he that loves God will love his brother also. Let there be kindness in your own family,—to your parents, to your

children, to your servants, to your sisters and brothers. Let there be kindness to the distressed and suffering; let there be no backbiting, no slandering; but let there be charity and peace, and allowance made for all men,—for is not this the character of the Holy Dove? is not this the mission of the HOLY GHOST? Did He not speak peace and goodwill when He brought the olive leaf to Noah across the destructive and desolate waters? Did He not speak peace on this occasion, and declare the opening of the heavens to a world with which the ALMIGHTY had been justly indignant? Let there, then, be peace, let there be kindness, and love and charity between Christians; for “Thus shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

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SERMON XV.

CHRIST, THE STONE.

1 S. PETER II. 4.

“TO WHOM COMING, AS UNTO A LIVING STONE, DISALLOWED INDEED OF MEN, BUT CHOSEN OF GOD, AND PRECIOUS, YE ALSO, AS LIVELY STONES, ARE BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE.”

ALL the persons who are here assembled have probably observed how in Scripture, from time to time, the Divine Spirit employs sensible objects and signs to convey the lessons of eternity ; for man possesses not only the faculty of reason, but of fancy ; and though both of these may be abused, yet, seeing they are God's gifts, they have respectively their legitimate use and purpose. We abuse and transgress with our reason when we use it against the ALMIGHTY, and

would measure the vastness of His counsels by our finite powers : and when we refuse to believe, because we cannot comprehend, such things as to us *must* be incomprehensible—the accounts, for example, which we possess of the Divine nature and plans, which must of necessity be a pure matter of revelation, which we must receive as we do a thousand other things, on unquestionable testimony, and which we hold not by sight nor yet by intellectual mastery and comprehension, but by faith. Yet no one will deny that there is a province over which reason may range at large. And so with regard to that faculty of the imagination. We must not indulge it to excess, nor allow it in Divine things to draw fanciful comparisons, or to build up a theory on some imagined resemblance which has no foundation. It would be mere idleness to employ our time in drawing similitudes which perchance have no existence, between earthly and heavenly things ; and we should be in danger, in most instances, of following our own mind instead of the mind of God. And yet even the imagination, which may be thus abused, has its proper place. God appeals to it very often for a divine purpose ; and

when, as in the text, that which He intends us to understand is so very obvious and plain; we must not pass by as fanciful the illustration which the HOLY GHOST employs, but must gather up its meaning, and act on its teaching.

We are told in the text that JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR is a "living stone." His members are also described as "lively stones." Let us ascertain the meaning of these expressions.

The word "stone" is employed in reference to our SAVIOUR in more senses than one. It is first of all applied to Him as the beginning and corner of the Christian Church. "JESUS saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders refused, the same is become the Head of the corner. This is the LORD's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." The Scribes and Pharisees who professed to be masters in Israel, and to build up their nation temporally, and as the kingdom of God, when they saw this Man among them in the form of a servant, of no reputation, with His countenance marred more than the sons of men, a bruised reed, not lifting up

His voice in the streets, then they despised and rejected Him as incapable for their purpose, and thrust Him aside as not being calculated for the lordly edifice which they designed to build. But GOD, Whose mind is not like our mind, had a different purpose; and whilst that most famous city of the world, Jerusalem, the joy of the whole earth, the beloved of the LORD, the seat of Kings and Prophets, the witness of miracles and wonders, should be trampled in the dust, and her gorgeous temple destroyed, the LORD designed and was actually building another temple and kingdom—the Christian and Catholic Church. And His only SON, by coming into the world, and gathering together Apostles, and teaching them the faith, and sending them to the nations, was the beginning of this kingdom, the Corner stone of this spiritual temple; and thus that stone which the builders refused was made the head stone of the corner. The temple which the LORD raised was built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief Corner stone. The corner stone is a very principal one; it is first laid; to it all the rest are

cemented—as it is written, “In Whom ye are also builded together.” Such is the position of JESUS CHRIST, in reference to the Catholic Church. He is the Corner stone of it ; its Head stone ; its beginning and origin, upon which it is raised and built.

2. But because both before CHRIST and after there have been many religious systems, which have not their origin in God ; and impostors in all ages have been ready to employ the religious feelings naturally impressed on the hearts of all men, for their own aggrandisement ; because, in the language of Gamaliel, “Before those days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody ; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves ; who was slain ; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nought :” and again, “After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him : and he also perished : and all even as many as obeyed him were dispersed :” Because the Allseeing foresaw the weakness and simplicity of mankind, ever ready to be drawn away by pretenders, and to follow novelties ; therefore, He taught by the

prophet Daniel, that this Corner stone, upon which the true Church is built, is not merely human, though He appeared in human nature, but a divine thing, supernatural and miraculous ; His religion is from heaven, is the only true ; is not the device of a man, the work of ambition, or of vanity, or of pride, or of discontent : to one of which causes may be for the most part reduced the new religions which spring up, become popular, and then die. No ; the kingdom and religion of the Messiah was framed in the Almighty counsels from the beginning ; was produced after long patience and preparation ; was heralded in and accompanied by marvels ; has prevailed against opposition and contempt ; and is to outlast every earthly system, and even the world itself ; and, therefore, because not human but divine, this stone is described as cut from the mountain without hands. If man would quarry from the mountain, and detach large portions from the rock for statuary or building, it must be done at a great cost of labour and mechanical skill : and that the same, or a greater result, should be produced *without* hands is miraculous. Such is the Kingdom and Church of

the REDEEMER—"the stone was cut from the mountain without hands."

3. And yet again in *that*, as far as we know, the most important work ever undertaken, the redemption of the world, in which a single mistake would have been fatal, and in which the Champion of mankind had to meet the assaults and varied stratagems of the devil: in which He had to be ever on His guard, ever watchful, never overcome by the weakness of the flesh, but ever obedient and dutiful to God; it was of necessity that some one should be selected, "harmless, holy, undefiled, without blemish and without spot, altogether perfect, Who could give satisfaction for the sins of the world." And who could thus satisfy God's justice? What human being, what angel, could atone for ages of sin, or hope to contend without any error, against the machinations of the devil." He looked, and there was none to help, and He wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore His *own* arm brought salvation; because every one else was certain to fail, He sent His only beloved SON to be the Corner stone of the Church. And this great care and circumspection in the choice of our

Deliverer—this setting that Divine Person upon the work, Who was alone competent for its achievement—is declared to us by the additional epithet of a *tried* or approved stone. “Therefore thus said the LORD GOD, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.”

But again, in the prophet Zechariah, our blessed LORD is called “the stone with seven eyes,” as indicating the superintendence and care which He must exercise over His people; for the number seven in Holy Scripture is used to denote perfection; and to say that this stone has seven eyes is only to affirm His oversight and watchfulness in the highest degree. For when we think of the hatred and opposition of mankind; when we consider how the “Kings of the earth stood up, and her rulers took counsel together against the LORD and against His CHRIST;” when we call to mind the plottings of the devil, and the craft and subtilty of worldly men; the desire of statesmen in all ages to make of the Church but an engine of Government, and the weakness and facility with which her members have ever yielded; the flatteries or

force from without, and the corruptions from within, it must be clearly evident, that unless there had been a watchful eye and a wise directing arm, instead of lasting for ever she must have been stifled in her birth. Many have been the periods in the history of Christianity,—periods of heresy, coldness, or superstition; periods of great strife and division (and, generally speaking, a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand;) when, but for the interference of Him, the Stone with seven eyes, the watchful and prudent who knew how to deliver the kingdom which He had reared with so much blood and labour, must have fallen. But His eye, as He hath told us, never slumbers; “I will never leave you nor forsake you;” and, “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them: and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” Such are the glorious promises which the Corner stone has made, and in accordance with them have been His performances.

And yet, in addition to all these, He is

called a "living stone," because to all those who are inserted into the heavenly building He communicates life. "Your life is hid with CHRIST in GOD." "When CHRIST, Who is our life, shall appear." "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." We are all naturally dead, and have no spiritual life within us ; but, united to CHRIST, made one with CHRIST, we receive the Divine spiritual life again, and are enrolled amongst the heirs of immortality. Every Christian, unless he have been separated from his LORD, is instinct with a life, which he had not before ; with that life, by which he must live in heaven. And this life is communicated to him from his LORD, at first when he is made a member of Him, and afterwards, as in various ways, he draws nigh to and drinks of the living Fountain. And as when upon the earth virtue went out of Him to staunch the widow's blood and to heal diseases, so from Him at this moment do virtue, and power, and grace, and holiness, come to His disciples, who, by their spiritual senses, touch and taste the REDEEMER. They in a marvellous manner dwell in Him, and He in them ; they are one with Him, and He with

them ; they are more and more transformed into His likeness, and made new creatures, because they are made like Him. Thus they are able to live a godly and Christian life, because the life which is in them is of CHRIST. It is by Him they live, by Him they think, by Him they speak, by Him they perform. But take away that life, and what will they become but sapless branches which bear no fruit ? Thus He hath Himself said, " Abide in Me, and I in you : as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can ye except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches : he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing."

Hitherto all that has been said of this Corner-stone, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, has been favourable to mankind : The foundation on which we rest,—not merely man, but God,—selected with the greatest care,—ever watchful and provident for His beloved,—communicating that life by which we hope to dwell with God ;—these are the things of which we have spoken, and the gifts which flow from the LORD JESUS to His chosen. But there are some persons who will not ac-

cept Him, people who will not come to Him that they may have life ; who, when the light shines, prefer darkness ; who will not believe the truth of His religion, or hear His precepts. And to these, we are told, He is no longer a corner stone—a tried stone—a precious stone—a stone communicating life ; but, on the contrary, “ a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.” The prophet Isaiah first declares it, and S. Peter from him repeats it : “ And He shall be for a sanctuary ;” that is, to His own people ; “ but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel : for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem : and many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.” Was it not so among His own people when He came ? The Scribes and the Pharisees, the high priests and the elders, the rulers and the multitude, alike stumbled at His doctrines, and found His pretensions, combined with His humility, “ a rock of offence :” As though some obstacle stood in the way, and a man should stumble over it to his great injury, so did they stumble at the exalted

doctrines and lowly guise of the Messiah, and met with their death instead of eternal life. It is the same at the present moment, and will so continue to the end. CHRIST is the rock of our salvation, or the stone of stumbling. Either men receive Him with all their heart, and then He is their salvation; or they reject Him, and then He is their ruin. Take His doctrines; take the recognized articles of the Christian faith. A Christian receives them on the authority of CHRIST. They may be difficult to understand; he may not be *able* to understand them; he may be obliged to confess, "I am not able to explain why and how these things are so;" but if God has spoken he accepts them, he believes them, he does not doubt, for God is true and cannot deceive; and a single word and assurance of God is more certain than the most elaborate conclusions of human reason. My reason, as every other part of me, is shattered and weakened by the fall. Think as deeply as I may, it is still likely enough that there may be an absent link in the chain; but God is all-perfect, His Word infallible and true. Only let me know, then, that He says so and I must

assent, whether I can see or not. This is faith; and the objects of faith are more sure and certain than the best conclusions of reason. But there are some who think not so: they refuse thus implicitly to believe; they despise in religion, and treat as of no importance that evidence and testimony upon which, in earthly affairs, they take away a man's life; and though they live so many hundred years away from the time when the Gospel events happened, they will accept nothing but what they can accurately reason out, which will be manifestly very little, because their reason is a disordered, broken, and deceptive instrument, which cannot take in the whole view, and distorts the objects which it surveys. And thus these unhappy persons find continually arising obstacles; and they first of all stumble at one thing in religion, and then at another, which must ever be the case as often as we require our own reason and sight to be satisfied, and will not take a thing on sufficient evidence, and act in religious matters as we do in earthly; will not say, if twelve men saw a thing it must be true; but though twelve men saw it, or a hundred or a thousand, still refuse to

believe because our individual, imperfect reason cannot comprehend. If we will act thus foolishly, then CHRIST and His religion, its holiest and most sublime truths, will speedily, as a judicial visitation, become a stumbling block ; and that shall be true of men which the Prophet predicts : “ We wait for light, but behold obscurity ; for brightness, but we walk in darkness ; we grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes ; we stumble at noonday, as in the night ; we are in desolate places as dead men.”

But as some men stumble and fall at the doctrines, so do other men at the precepts of their REDEEMER. They are good Christians in being ready to believe, nay, to contend for the articles of the faith : but they are bad Christians in declining to fulfil the Commandments. They run readily to CHRIST to hear what He teaches ; but when He says anything against their inclinations they go away sorrowful, like him in the Gospel who had great possessions. They believe aright, but they do not try to walk aright ; they are Christians in name, not in fact ; they are Christians of the day, Christians according to the world’s rule, Christians

according to the fashion and custom, and prescribed limits of the circle in which they move ; and they will contend for that custom as for everlasting truth, and measure what is required of them, what is necessary, and will save their souls by their own private opinion, resolve, or prejudice, and not by the words or spirit of the Gospel. And hence these, too, instead of simply taking the Bible for their guide, are in truth led by their own reason. They make themselves the standard of what is necessary, and not God : they invariably say to you, "I think," not "God says." And hence these also, like the others, stumble at noon-day ; for they have no other guide but what is interested, and changeable as the wind.

But if we thus, whether in belief or practice, consult only our own mind and not the mind of God, what will be the consequence ? Our Blessed Lord Himself hath testified, concerning those to whom in the end that Corner stone is not for salvation, but who stumble in disobedience, "Whosoever shall fall on that stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

SERMON XVI.

PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE.

1 S. PETER II. 5.

“AN HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD BY JESUS CHRIST.”

THE Apostle is speaking here of the privileges of Christians, and of the advantages, which through their Head and Master JESUS CHRIST, they possess over the rest of mankind. He has already told them, that as stones in a building, so are they inserted in their LORD, that they are one Body with Him, and filled and dwelt in by His Spirit. He now adds another distinction, ye are “an holy priesthood, set apart, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by JESUS CHRIST.”

1. Now let us first ask the question, what is a Priest? "Ye are a holy priesthood." In another place it is said, "Ye are a royal priesthood;" again, "a kingdom of Priests;" and yet again, "Priests and kings." What is the meaning of this word Priest, and what is the distinct notion which it conveys?

That which makes a man a priest is the circumstance of his being separated from the rest of the world, to present offerings to the ALMIGHTY. He may combine other things with this his more peculiar duty. He may, for example, be an instructor of the people, and preach the holy law of God, and explain His religion; but it is not for this reason that he is a Priest. He is only a Priest because set aside and solemnly consecrated, to offer those sacrifices which God hath appointed as the means of turning away His wrath from man.

This might easily be proved to you from the Old Testament. I shall only take one verse from the New; it is from the third verse of the eighth chapter to the Hebrews; what says the Apostle? "Every High Priest is ordained, to *offer gifts and sacrifices*, wherefore it is of necessity that this man

should have somewhat to offer." He is speaking of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, and is proving Him to be a Priest. How, he says, shall I prove Him to be a Priest? Why I prove it in this way, that He has made to God an *offering* and a *sacrifice*. For every High Priest is ordained—ordained for what? to say prayers in the congregation? to read the Scriptures every Sabbath day? to unfold their meaning? Nay he does these things; but as a Priest he is ordained specially to offer gifts and sacrifices; and hence because CHRIST has offered a sacrifice, therefore is He a Priest—this is the Apostle's argument, and it shows the meaning of the word, that a Priest is one who has been consecrated to the office of offering gifts and sacrifices to the ALMIGHTY.

It will be needless to show at any length, that the LORD JESUS CHRIST was thus a Priest, that is, that He offered a sacrifice to God. In the central age of the world, at the middle point, between the times before and after, the Everlasting sent His only Son upon the earth. He was proclaimed by an angel. He was born of a woman. He was barbarously treated. His Body was nailed

to a tree. That birth, and humiliation, and contempt, and poverty,—that blameless life, and undeserved death were the sacrifices which He offered. He was Himself indeed the sacrifice, and the sacrificer; the thing which was offered, and the Priest who offered it. That Body was a victim and a sacrifice, acceptable to God, because it would expiate the sins of the whole world; because it would atone for all, and make it possible for God to forgive all; because in consequence of that all who now believe and repent, shall be saved. And He was the Priest, because He did it voluntarily, deliberately and of choice. “No man,” He said, “taketh My life from Me.” “No man can unless I choose. I however choose it. I offer it a sacrifice, I give it for the world.” Therefore He is constantly called our Priest. “CHRIST being come, a High Priest of good things to come.” “Having a High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart.” “Seeing then we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, JESUS CHRIST, let us hold fast our profession.”

Were there ever any Priests before

CHRIST? any persons, that is, to use S. Paul's description of what constitutes a Priest; any persons who were set apart, consecrated and solemnly ordained for the express purpose of offering gifts and sacrifices to God? You are all sufficiently acquainted with the Bible, to know that there were such. Aaron, his sons, and his sons' sons, were appointed for this purpose. "Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto Me in the Priest's office." This was God's command, and this was done. And ever after, with an occasional interval, down to the day when Zacharias, in the first chapter of S. Luke, "executed the Priest's office, in the order of his course," incense and offerings went up to the LORD GOD from the priests of the children of Israel. But although there were Priests, as the Holy JESUS was a Priest, although they both were ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices to GOD; did they offer the same gifts, or the same sacrifices? No! The LORD JESUS CHRIST offered Himself—they offered the body of a bull or a goat. The REDEEMER offered a sacrifice, on account of which sins

are taken away ; they offered sacrifices, pointing to, representing, foreshadowing, teaching men about, and directing their minds, thoughts, and attention, to that great Sacrifice which was to take place at the middle point of the world's history, and should atone and gain pardon, for the sins of mankind.

But another question : the sons of Aaron were Priests. The REDEEMER was a Priest. They alike offered sacrifices to God, though of a different kind. Are there any Priests at the present time ? Are there Priests in the Christian dispensation ? The text answers positively, "Ye are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices." I said, that the peculiarity of the Priest's office, that which makes a man a Priest, is this—that he is ordained to offer sacrifices and gifts. Now both the Clergy and the people in the Christian Church are ordained to do this ; one in a more confined, the other in a more extended sense ; they have both to offer sacrifices, and they are both therefore constituted Priests—"Ye are a holy priesthood."

The peculiar offering which the Ministers of the Christian Church have to make, as distinct from the people ; that for which they

are especially set apart, and ordained, is to present to God the commemorative sacrifice, so Divines call it, of bread and wine ; that is our offering, that is the sacrifice which we are ordained to present unto God. It is called commemorative because we thereby commemorate, repeat over again by representation, re-enact and make our appeal to, the great tragedy of the Cross ; and express reliance on that alone meritorious sacrifice, which we thus continually show forth. Hence Deacons in the Christian Church may preach and say prayers ; but Priests only may offer the sacrifice ; this indeed is the distinction between Priests and Deacons : the one is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, the other not. To this sacrifice of the Christian Priesthood S. Paul has reference in the thirteenth chapter to the Hebrews, “ We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, who serve the tabernacle.” Who are “ they that serve the tabernacle ? ” The Jews : they have a Priesthood, they have altars, and so have we. *We* have an altar, the LORD’s table : we have Priests, the Christian Ministry, we have a sacrifice of bread and wine, and the Jews have no right to partake of it, because they

do not believe in Him, Whom it represents, in that which it sets forth, in those great benefits which it signifies : We have an altar, we Christians have an altar ; the words are quite plain ; but if we have an altar, we must have a sacrifice to place on it ; and if we have a sacrifice, we must have Priests to offer it.

But why is the altar, on which we present the Christian sacrifice, to Almighty God, the commemorative sacrifice of bread and wine : the sacrifice in which we represent over again the broken Body and precious Blood of the true Lamb, and by which we invoke to our aid the benefits of His Passion : why is this called as often the Communion Table, sometimes one and sometimes the other ? Some of you, brethren, doubtless know these things ; but all do not know them. Let those who know be patient, for the sake of those who are ignorant. Why then is the holy place round which we are commanded to assemble, called at one time the table in Scripture, and at another time "the altar ?" Which is wrong, and which is right ? Both of them are right, for both words are employed by the HOLY GHOST. Both of them are right, but for different rea-

sons. We must remember that the sacrament of the LORD's Supper is not only a sacrifice, but a feast; we not only offer bread and wine before the LORD, but we partake of it afterwards. Now a banquet, or feast, is spread on a table. If we are speaking then of the sacrament as a feast, if that is the idea we have in our mind, then is the place from which it is served, a *table* only, it is the table of the LORD, because it is the feast of the LORD; and if we reflect further, that in that feast we have communion with the LORD JESUS, that after a divine and spiritual manner, we then eat His flesh and drink His blood, we dwell in Him, and He dwells in us, then you see how fitly it is called the communion table, or the table at which we have communion with the LORD. If on the other hand, you have this thought in your mind, this is the place where the breaking of CHRIST's Body, and the pouring out of His blood, is offered to God by representation; where we show forth, exhibit, repeat, the image, and shadow of the sacrifice of CHRIST till He come, then is the LORD's table the LORD's altar likewise: for an altar is a place at which sacrifices are offered.

And thus, as it was the office of the sons of Aaron, by their offerings of bulls and of goats, to show forth the sacrifice of CHRIST, till He came the first time to suffer ; so is it now the office of the Christian Priesthood, by the continual offering of bread and wine, to show forth that same death of the REDEEMER, until He shall come a second time in glory. They, it is true, lived before, and we are living after ; they signified what was to come : we show forth what is past. They declared “ the Lamb has yet to die ; ” we say, “ He is dead, and hath risen again.” They presented a bloody, we a bloodless sacrifice ; they the flesh of animals, we bread and wine : and yet we agree in one thing, that both our sacrifices are but typical, are but representations, are but faint images and shadows ; and that whatever benefit we derive from their performance, is not derived from them, but from that which they represent, and to which they refer us : the one awful, sublime, meritorious sacrifice on the cross, which taketh away the sins of the world.

I have laid before you what appears to be the truth of Holy Scripture : judge your own selves, read for yourselves. But now, ye

also are Priests, though not in the same sense. It is not your place to offer on the altar the sacrifice of bread and wine ; for mark the words, "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." He is speaking of the Priesthood. Every man must be appointed to this office, in God's way. He must not assume it: in truth he *cannot* assume it. His performances are null and mere imitation. Let us suppose a case, "I may know the law: if a case were brought before me, I might be able to decide on it correctly, yet I cannot settle the matter and put an end to the dispute. If I attempted to do so, no man would listen to me. Why? I have no authority. I have not been appointed to the office which I assume, therefore any decision of mine would not stand good or be recognized." And "no man taketh *this* honour to himself, S. Paul affirms, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." God ordained that the Jewish Priesthood should be appointed in a particular manner, and none but those appointed in that manner *could* be Priests. "Even CHRIST," S. Paul adds, "glorified not Himself to be made a High

Priest ;” neither can you thus glorify, or take the honour to yourselves of being Priests. Men must be consecrated and set apart by those to whom CHRIST hath left authority, and in the way CHRIST hath ordained. If you were to take the office upon you of a Priest, and were to ask me why I would not attend your ministrations, I should be obliged to answer, to use a common term, because I have no faith in them. I *know* that were you to act as a magistrate your decision would be null, and that anything done would be so much waste paper. I am afraid, were you to act as a Priest, your performances would be as worthless, and perhaps, more profane. I do not see how you can make *yourself* a Priest. I do not see how the Almighty, Who has a Church and Priests of His own, is bound to, or is likely to recognize the performances of those who assume the Priesthood. This then is the truth: I have no faith in what you do, because you have assumed the office to yourself, and have not been ordained to it in CHRIST’S way. I cannot feel that there is any guarantee or certainty, of your ministrations being sanctioned ; of there being in them virtue, power,

grace, pardon, life ; of a single word you say carrying with it any authority ; of a single rite or ceremony, say the Sacrament of the LORD's Supper, conveying that for which it was intended. I am afraid it is all emptiness, barrenness, the body void of the soul, the shell robbed of the kernel, a mere playing at religion, the form without the power.

And yet you are Priests, ordained by God to offer spiritual sacrifices ; these, upon which with great advantage I might dwell at length, I can now only mention briefly. And what are these ? What are the sacrifices, O God, which we must all offer ? what must we give to Thee ? What must we devote to Thee ? Ourselves : this is one sacrifice. We would like to do as we please with ourselves ; we would indulge in any manner. But, no ; you must sacrifice yourself to the LORD. " I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." This is one thing. Is there yet another ? *Good works* are mentioned in Scripture ; that through the grace and might of the Holy Spirit, without Whom we can do nothing,

we should offer such good works as God hath commanded, and such as He loves. Lo ! the altar of the LORD is before us : to this spot let us bring our goods ; here let us present our substance, and somewhat of our possessions, oil and wine, and the fat of rams, our silver and gold, for “ the silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the LORD of Hosts.” “ To do good, and to communicate, forget not ; for, with such sacrifices, God is well pleased.” And remember the Psalm, “ Offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD ;” and the prophet Micah, “ What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?” Is there any other sacrifice which we can offer ? Surely we can pray to Him : we can kneel to Him : we can pay Him this honour, for it is said, “ Let my prayer be set before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.” And can we not praise Him likewise ? for it is written, “ Let us offer unto God the sacrifice of praise continually.” These are the sacrifices over and above that great one at the altar, which we must offer unto our God : the sacrifice of

our bodies, of our good works, of prayer and thanksgiving; and they are spiritual sacrifices, because they are the efforts principally of the inner man, and wrought by the aid of the Spirit. Give these, my brethren! Present unto your God these. Come with these in your hand, and lay them upon His altar. Deny your bodies their desires: see what good works you can do, be constant in the practice of prayer, and be thankful to God for blessings past and to come. And offer these things to your Heavenly FATHER, by JESUS CHRIST: He will make them acceptable, He will cause them to be received, He will embalm them in His own merits, and give them the sweet savour of His own most precious sacrifice; He will present them as done in His Name, as done for His sake, as done by His disciples. Though the ALMIGHTY might not have listened to *you*, He will give heed for His SON's sake; though He might regard the very best sacrifices you can offer as in themselves worthless (and in truth they are so), yet, when presented by His SON, they will be esteemed and valued. Behold, there is a Mediator between God and man; we have an Advocate; there is

One Who intercedes, Who recommends, Who makes our prayer and praise and good works to be accepted by God, and turn to our advantage. "To offer up spiritual sacrifices," writes S. Peter, "this is your duty, this your privilege, this your employment, sons and daughters of the ALMIGHTY, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by JESUS CHRIST."

SERMON XVII.

THE HOLY GHOST.

S. JOHN XVI. 7.

“NEVERTHELESS I TELL YOU THE TRUTH : IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR YOU THAT I GO AWAY : FOR IF I GO NOT AWAY, THE COMFORTER WILL NOT COME UNTO YOU, BUT IF I DEPART I WILL SEND HIM UNTO YOU.”

THAT which we consider perhaps at the time to be the greatest possible misfortune, often in the providence of our God turns out to be the greatest good. The old man Jacob almost fell to the ground for sorrow, when his sons told him that Joseph his youngest and most beloved was the prey of wild beasts, and when in proof of it they brought him his coat of many colours ; and yet he was taken away by God's providence, that in the

time of a grievous famine he might be the saviour of his father's house. In his own words, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." When people lose their children; when their goods and their possessions make to themselves wings and flee away; when the object of their idolatry is removed; when any sickness, accident, or unexpected distress overwhelms them: they think themselves, at first sight, the most wretched of human beings; "was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me?" And yet, because "the LORD chasteneth whom He loveth," this their temporary loss may be an eternal gain. God has taken away from them some of His good things, but He bestows upon them greater. He withdraws that treasure which *could* be, but for a time, that He may heap upon them unbounded, infinite riches.

My brethren, such was the case with the disciples of the LORD JESUS: that which they thought a heavy grief, in reality brought them joy. They grieved, and surely they might well grieve, when CHRIST said to

them, "I go away;" "Because I have said these things unto you sorrow hath filled your hearts." It is distressing to lose a friend, to think that we shall hear his voice no more, nor again grasp his hand, or behold his countenance; but how distressing to the disciples to lose *such* a friend, one so kind, one so condescending, one ready to make such sacrifices, as JESUS CHRIST. It is distressing to lose a *protector*, especially if we feel ourselves helpless, and that his departure will be only followed by sorrow; and yet this was the very case of the Apostles. JESUS CHRIST was *their* protector, and when He was gone the storm would fall on themselves. "They shall put you out of the synagogues, yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." What wonder if they were sorrowful? How did the LORD console them? He said that this their loss, was a gain: that it was necessary for them: that there was in store for them a great good, which they could not possess, did not CHRIST go away. "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you."

And, as to-day, the Comforter came : I need hardly remind you of that wonderful event : Those who have been at church have heard it all in to-day's services : How the disciples were assembled together in an upper room, as we may be, in this temple of God : how, suddenly, in the midst of the calm, in the midst of our prayers, a rushing as of the wind is heard, giving notice of something miraculous : how, as suddenly are seen on the heads of the disciples, cloven tongues like unto fire, the outward, visible, appearance of the HOLY GHOST.

Thus the promise is fulfilled : " I will send Him unto you." Lo ! He is come : to-day He is come. The rushing sound and the tongues of fire prove it. The speaking with new tongues is a manifest proof of it. The love, the zeal, the courage, which were immediately displayed by the Apostles, show that they had received new power in their hearts. The HOLY GHOST is come. But why is He come ? why must He have come ? Why would the coming of our LORD at Christmas have availed us nothing, had not the HOLY GHOST come on Whit-Sunday ? This is the question, which under the guid-

ance of that same HOLY GHOST, I will attempt briefly to answer.

1. And first of all, since Almighty God would have all men be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth ; since from the beginning of the world, He had ordained your salvation, and had been preparing things gradually to bring that salvation about ; the coming of the HOLY GHOST was necessary for its accomplishment. For this, the sending of the HOLY GHOST is the last act in that great plan, whereby God would save you. As I said, there was a long preparation, there was a great succession of events before God's plan for saving you was complete. There were prophets to foretell it, there were types and images to shadow it forth ; there were significations of it in dreams, and by the special messages of angels. And then the SON came, and was born in poverty, and visited by the wise men, and carried into Egypt, and He lived a holy life, and taught His heavenly doctrine, and gathered disciples, and then was crucified. But there was one act yet remaining to crown the whole work, the sending the HOLY GHOST. That was the consummation, the

perfection, the completion of God's plan : could the work be left unfinished ? Could God's plan be left half done ? How would the devils mock, and insultingly employ the LORD's own language, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish." How would they have triumphed, that there should have been so much preparation, such labours by CHRIST, such humiliation by God's only SON, even His submission to take our vile flesh, and to shame and spitting, and the death on the cross, in vain. For, as I said before, had not God sent the HOLY GHOST, all that went before would have been vain. This then, my brethren, is the reason why the Comforter must come, and why at this season we should commemorate most thankfully His coming. He is necessary to our salvation, we cannot be saved without Him.

2. But *how*, we will inquire next, was the sending of the HOLY GHOST necessary to complete God's plan for our salvation ? "I thought," it may be said, "that that great plan was finished on the Cross, that when CHRIST exclaimed 'It is finished,' and had breathed His last sigh, and given up the ghost, every

thing that was necessary had been done for the redemption of the whole world." This is quite true, my brethren ; on the Cross, by our gracious LORD and SAVIOUR, a complete satisfaction and oblation was made for the sins of the whole world ; on the Cross CHRIST did all that was necessary to blot out the sins of every one ; on the Cross, by His meritorious death and passion, He gained pardon, purity, innocence, peace, glory for you all. But mark ! He gained them for you, He purchased them for you, He treasured them up for you, so that no other price need be paid for them ; no other purchaser is required ; they are bought, they are obtained at the cost of His dying. But He did not *give* them to you then. How could He ? you were not living. It was eighteen hundred years ago that CHRIST gained these things for you by His death, but you were not then born. How could He apply His blood to you ? how pardon you ? how comfort you ? how purify you before you were in existence ? Now this, my brethren (and I hope I have made myself clear, for indeed it is very important to understand this aright), this is the special and peculiar office of the

HOLY GHOST, for which it was absolutely necessary He should come, and for which God sent Him: that He should apply to, and bestow upon, each one of you, individually and separately, as you come into the world, and afterwards as you seek them, those great treasures and gifts, that redemption and sanctification, which CHRIST once for all purchased on the Cross. Listen to this text; ponder it well:—"When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak: He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Again, "He shall take of Mine, and show it unto you." Observe what CHRIST says, "I am going away: I Who have been your Comforter: but I will send you another Comforter—I will send you the HOLY GHOST, and He will not bring you a different comfort from that which I should give you; but He shall bring you the same, He shall minister to you that pardon and peace, that strength and sanctity, which I would have ministered. He shall be in My place: He shall be My minister: He shall take of

Mine and show it unto you, for We are One: He is My Spirit, and My FATHER's Spirit: My gifts, and My FATHER's gifts" He ministers: "He shall not speak of Himself," that is, as separate from the FATHER and the SON; "but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak."

Now you see, I hope, the office of the HOLY GHOST. He ministers to you the things of CHRIST: He takes of the things of CHRIST, and gives them to you. As you cannot be saved without JESUS CHRIST, so neither can you be saved without the HOLY GHOST, Who is the Spirit of CHRIST; for if a man have not the Spirit of CHRIST, He is none of His. Did CHRIST purchase for you on the Cross pardon and holiness? yes; but it is the HOLY GHOST Who bestows these gifts of CHRIST. A man buys an estate: he completes the purchase: nay, he has paid down the money. And yet there is one thing more, he must be put in possession: if he be not put in possession, what avails it that the money has been paid—the money is lost, and he is no better. Now the blood of CHRIST is not lost, because there are thousands who will be put in pos-

session of their eternal inheritance : but, as far as we are concerned, it may have been shed in vain ; and though the estate has been purchased for us, and every farthing paid, we may never get possession. It hath, as I said, been purchased. Pardon and holiness, and everlasting glory have been purchased ; for CHRIST hath died. He promised to purchase the estate, and He hath done it. It cost a high price, but He hath paid it. He paid it not in gold and silver, things useless for such a purchase, but He paid it in sufferings and humiliation, and a life of bondage ; and as nothing else would do, He gave His blood. He completed the purchase of an estate for us, and now the HOLY GHOST is the Person to put us in possession. This, then, is another reason why the HOLY GHOST must necessarily come. It is little to us that CHRIST purchased good things a long time since, unless He has left some one in His place to bestow those things on us, as we severally come into the Church. He has left some one : though He be gone Himself, He has given another Comforter ; and it is His office to take of the things of CHRIST, and show them to us.

3. Since then the LORD JESUS CHRIST hath purchased for us heavenly things, and hath appointed the HOLY GHOST to distribute them to each of us, and to divide to us the LORD's alms and the crumbs from His table severally as He will ; we see what we are to look for in the various means of grace : we are to look therein for the HOLY GHOST to bestow upon us what CHRIST hath purchased. What are we to understand by the expression " means of grace ?" In the general thanksgiving we thank God daily for " the means of grace." What are we to understand thereby ? That there are particular practices, particular appointments of Almighty God, which, if we have recourse to in the required spirit, the HOLY GHOST will therein bestow upon us some one or more of CHRIST's gifts. " He will take of the things of CHRIST and show them to us." This is the reason why CHRIST hath commanded us to be baptized ; that the HOLY GHOST, in this " means of grace," in this means whereby grace comes, may fulfil His office, and may apply to us the blood of CHRIST, which cleanseth from all sin : according to the Scriptures, " Arise, and be baptized, and

wash away thy sin : ” according to the Creed, “ I believe in one baptism for the remission of sin : ” and in our Service, “ We call upon Thee for this infant, that he may receive remission of his sins. ” And who is it that applies the blood of CHRIST in this means of grace ? Listen again, “ By one Spirit, ” says S. Paul, “ are we all baptized ; ” and after S. Paul our Church, “ We yield Thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit. ”

The next means of grace in order, seems to be prayer ; for the baptized child may be very early taught to pray ; and we are enjoined to be instant in prayer ; but why ? Because the HOLY GHOST will meet us therein, and bestow on us those gifts of CHRIST which we require. It is distinctly stated “ your Heavenly FATHER will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. ” Then follows Christian instruction, which is the means by which the HOLY GHOST enlightens ; and next confirmation, by which the HOLY GHOST strengthens against the devil and the world. In the Acts of the Apostles we read, “ Then laid they their hands upon them, and

they received the HOLY GHOST ;” and in our own service listen to this prayer, “ Almighty and ever living God, Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by Water and the HOLY GHOST, and hast given them forgiveness of all their sins.” This you see is past ; they have, so our Church teaches, been regenerated by Water and the HOLY GHOST, they have received the forgiveness of all their sins :” and now what is asked in Confirmation ? “ Strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O LORD, with the HOLY GHOST the Comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness.” Need I add the most important means of all, the Communion of the LORD’S Body and Blood ; wherein it is said, that “ we do spiritually eat the flesh of CHRIST and drink His blood :” that is, we eat it after a heavenly and spiritual manner, and we eat it by the ministration of the Spirit ; the Spirit makes it to be what it is ; “ we have been all made to drink,” says the Scripture, “ into one Spirit.” It is wrought, says our Homily, “ into the

souls of the faithful, by the operation of the HOLY GHOST."

And now you know what is meant by the "means of grace," and why we are taught to thank God daily for those means. I ask you whether the Apostles had not reason to thank God when they saw the fiery tongues; yet these were but the signs, the outward emblems and pledges of the invisible Spirit; these met their sight, these touched their outward senses, but Him they saw not, Whose presence they signified, and who gave them power to speak with tongues; and so in prayer and the blessed Sacraments, we behold not God, "for no man hath seen God at any time,"—but they are the pledges to us, that the Spirit of CHRIST is present; and the means by which He distributes to us the graces of CHRIST. Let us then ever approach the means of grace with faith. Let us see the HOLY GHOST, CHRIST'S Minister present, ready to bestow whatever CHRIST purchased on the Cross. In Holy Baptism, in the teaching of pastors, in reading Scripture, in Confirmation, in the Holy Communion, let us know that He has good things to give us, if we have but the faith to recog-

nize and receive them. But here is our defect. We have no faith. "When I come shall I find faith on the earth?" We do not believe that the Comforter is come to us, that He is among us, that He dwells with us. Those divine means and sacred ordinances, which to him who believes, are instinct with life, and to which he has recourse, that therein the Spirit may minister to him the things of CHRIST; these too many of us regard as mere ceremonies and forms, and look for nothing, seek for nothing, desire nothing, and so receive nothing. O what is the use of the form without the power, or of using the sign, if we have not the thing which it signifies? and certainly we shall not have the thing signified, if we have not even faith in its existence. Of what use for the Apostles to have seen the outward sign, the cloven tongues resting on their heads, if they had not received the wonderful power to speak the various languages of the earth. As far as we know, prayer, and Baptism, and the Holy Communion, and the other appointments of CHRIST, are instituted that by them, we may receive the gifts of CHRIST. This is their aim,

and if we do not therein receive the gifts, if the HOLY GHOST is not CHRIST's Minister therein to us ; then are they indeed made to be bare ceremonies, and idle forms, and they are used to our condemnation.

It was necessary then, that the HOLY GHOST should come, because it completed God's plan for our salvation ; it was necessary, because of that which CHRIST gained for us on the Cross, it is He, and He only Who puts us in possession. And He puts those in possession of CHRIST's gifts, who have recourse to Him by faith in the various means of grace. Two things then I would urge upon you in conclusion. In whatever religious service you engage, think of the HOLY GHOST ; think first of all that you are in His presence—and that you can do little good without Him. Your prayer, your reading, your Communion, will be profitless and dead unless He give it life, unless the Spirit make intercession for you with groanings which cannot be uttered. Think that the Divine, Almighty, Eternal, Spirit of CHRIST is before you, the Spirit Who receives of the things of CHRIST to give to you. Think that you pray, are baptized, are con-

firmed, and go to the Holy Communion, to receive Divine gifts, to receive therein grace, and pardon ; to be made meek, pure, gentle, forgiving, self-denying. This kind of expectation, this looking to receive something, this desire of Divine things, this belief in the Spirit's presence, will alone prevent the services with which we would honour God, degenerating into forms. If I pray, and am not careful, to remember God's presence, and to keep my mind intent and desirous of the things which I ask for ; my prayer, whether without book or with it, is a formal one,—I gain nothing by it, it were as well unsaid. If I go to confirmation, just because others do so, and do not feel my need of the HOLY GHOST, and do not earnestly think of Him, and do not as earnestly pray for Him ; I make confirmation to be in my case, what ignorant or hostile people would make it to be in every case, useless and idle—a curse and not a blessing. If I go to the Holy Communion, and in S. Paul's language, “do not discern the LORD's Body ;” if I do not approach, as our Church speaks, with “a lively faith ;” if I do not think of, and consider my many sins ; if I do not determine to quit

them; if I do not in my mind, see the Spirit present, applying to me CHRIST's Blood to wash them all away, and giving me His Body to be my strength and spiritual sustenance; then is the Holy Communion too, made a form and a ceremony, and to increase my condemnation. Think then, my brethren, when you come to church, and in every thing you do whilst in the church, "why does God call me here? what am I come for? why am I to listen to the preacher? why join in the prayers? Is it not that I may be made better, and be drawn to God? Can the coming here, the looking round me, the listening to a sermon, and the gossiping as I go home, can profit? Must I not remember in whose presence I am? must I not attend? must I not shake off my sloth, and cease to be careless, and give myself to God, and wait upon God? Here have I been in church through a whole service, and it is commonly the case, but I have not joined with my heart and soul in a single prayer, nor tried to be in the HOLY GHOST. Here have I listened to a thousand sermons, and criticised every preacher, but I have never once thought of doing what has been told me,

nor had the humility to *learn*, and what a formal, nominal worshipper am I! How false is my religion! I have no religion, I am only a pretender." My brethren, be aroused; employ your mind; fix your attention; think of the HOLY GHOST; hold communion with Him, and ask Him to give you of the things of JESUS CHRIST.

Thus, my brethren, if you keep yourselves in the presence of the HOLY GHOST, if you think of Him and seek Him, and try to please Him in all you do, thus only can you advance in the kingdom of God: and if you would know, as you ought to know, by frequent inquiry, whether indeed you are advancing in that kingdom; let me remind you of the second point which I intended to urge, that the Spirit Who rules and governs Christians, is the *Holy* Spirit. He is the Spirit Who makes holy, Who sanctifies, consecrates, draws away from the world, and worldly ways, the people of God. Would you then know whether you have good hopes of heaven: whether if you die you will be saved? Consider which occupies your soul: a pure, forgiving, forbearing, loving, self-mortifying, praying spirit, or a spirit base,

impure, unclean, covetous, passionate, unforgiving, never praying to God? Consider, O man, which occupies thy soul, which fills thy heart, which engages thy thoughts, which influences thy practice; a spirit making you holy, or a spirit making you unholy. By this may you judge; by their fruits shall ye know them. If you bring forth love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance; then are you inhabited by the good Spirit. If you bring forth adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; then, alas! are you inhabited by the evil spirit, and can never inherit the kingdom of God: O no, the evil and the good Spirit can never dwell together; both cannot dwell in your hearts; you must cast out the evil, and seek for and cherish the good. Pray for Him, my brethren: entreat Him to come to you: look for Him in those ways which CHRIST hath appointed: Follow carefully what He says to you in your heart: turn not away from Him: quench Him not: but if ye live in the Spirit, walk also in the Spirit.

SERMON XVIII.

THE ELECT.

1 S. PETER I. 2.

“ELECT ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE FATHER, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT, UNTO OBEDIENCE AND SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.”

S. PETER here tells you, what you are—for what purpose you are such, and to how great privilege you may reach. “Elect,” he says, “according to the foreknowledge of God.” What does elect mean? In general it is but another name for Christians. The word is taken from the Old Testament; where it is applied, not to one or two individuals, but to the Jewish nation. They were highly favoured; they were gathered from other nations; they had the law and the prophets, and means which others had not; and there-

fore they are called, what they were, God's favoured select people. Hence Moses inquires of them "what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon Him for." You know that of all those who went out of Egypt, but two entered Canaan; you know that many were very wicked, and rebelled against God, and murmured in the wilderness, and were punished with death—and yet they are every one called God's chosen. "For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are on the face of the earth." Thus Almighty God calls the Church in the wilderness, that is all the Jewish people; His holy, His elect, His special, His chosen people. This is the language of the Old Testament applied to the Jews. But what does S. Peter do? He quotes the very language, he takes the very passage, he employs the very words; and he says to the Christian Church which arose in the place of the Jewish—"Ye,"—these words were formerly applied to the Jews, but the Jews are no

more ; their Church is dissolved ; and taught by the Spirit, I apply the words to you ; to whom they always belonged in a more true and special sense—I, an Apostle of CHRIST, directed by Him, say, that ye fill the place of the Jews ; and now, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.”

Again, the very title and address of this Epistle, show for whom it was meant, and what persons the Apostle had in his mind, when he used these words to them, .“elect according to the foreknowledge of God.” For what is the title ? The general—in Greek, the Catholic—Epistle of S. Peter. Now what does this mean, but that it is not for a small number of Christians, nor yet for the Church of a particular district, like some of S. Paul’s epistles ; but for the Church universal, all the members of which he calls “elect.” Again. Observe the first verse : “To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect.” These countries are of very large extent, and were filled with Christians. As to the greater part of the persons whom he addresses, S. Peter could have known nothing of their

character or habits any more than we can tell how individuals are living in private in France or Ireland. He might not have known one of them personally. How, then, could he pronounce upon the eternal salvation of, and insure life in heaven to, the hundreds of thousands in those countries? But he means nothing of the sort. He knew that life was before them, whilst it was not before others; he knew that they had light, and knowledge, and grace, and opportunities not given to others; he knew that they had been gathered into the Christian fold, which was not the case with others. They had been chosen to great privileges, "to be holy and without blame before him in love," to be "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and to everlasting life," if they did not forfeit it. Upon all these grounds he calls them elect, chosen, peculiar, special, and predestined to this before the foundation of the world.

That which is true of the Church as a whole, is true of its parts. Accordingly, S. Paul, addressing different parts of the Christian body, at different times—the

Church at Ephesus, or Rome, or Corinth — calls them in turn elect, chosen, called, saints, sanctified ; for all which words we are at present accustomed to use the single word Christian, for this is what the words mean at the beginning of S. Paul's Epistles. He does not mean to say that all whom he calls saints were so in their practice, any more than those whom we call Christians are really such. But he means that they were called, and chosen, and designed by God to be saints : truly saints upon earth, and triumphing souls in heaven.

And that which was true of the Roman, the Ephesian, and the Corinthian branch of the Church universal, is true of the English branch at the present day. We are elect : we are elect, “ according to the foreknowledge of GOD the FATHER, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of JESUS CHRIST.” This you learnt as children ; for as soon as you could speak you were taught, or should have been taught, to regard yourselves as the elect of God. Hear the words : “ I believe in God the HOLY GHOST Who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of GOD.” “ Me and all

the elect.” Do you not see that you number yourself here among God’s elect, “Who sanctifieth me,” and other elect persons; Who sanctifieth the elect, and me among them?” And as the Catechism, wherein these words occur, is provided by the Church for all her children, we are taught that all within her fold are the elected children of God, and inheritors of heaven.

Why, I would ask, do you send missions to the heathen, if you have not something to enrich them with which they possess not? And have you not a church, and the blessed Sacraments, and the Holy Scriptures, and a ministering priesthood, and the HOLY GHOST moving your hearts? And if you look upon the world, you will find that those who have a knowledge of the Gospel are but thinly scattered upon her surface; that the bright illumined spots are few; but that, as it regards millions, and tens of millions, darkness still covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. But you are in the light: you are a chosen, special, peculiar people. I say not as to the use of privileges, but as to their possession. A man may shut his eyes, though the sun be beaming: a man may

turn back from the brink of heaven. Nevertheless, the possession of such privileges proves you to be high in God's favour—His elect and chosen people, for an exalted purpose.

We may, if we like, by a kind of agreement, call those only the elect who shall finally reach heaven; but God only knows these, we cannot know them. I am, however, on this occasion explaining to you the general meaning of the word in *Scripture*, and specially the meaning of it in the text. It is but another name for CHRIST'S Church, another name for Christians.

2. And now what does God, according to S. Peter, to His elect people? How does He assure them of their election, and enable them to make their calling and election sure? He gives them His Spirit in their hearts: "through sanctification," it is said, "of the Spirit." It is affirmed in the following words, "that God hath elected you unto obedience." He hath chosen you, and made you His with this design, that you may obey Him; but of yourselves you are incapable, weak, powerless. And to call upon a blind man to use his sight, or upon a dead man to do the

works of the living; or, what is the same thing, to call upon the spiritually blind, or dead, to do such good works as God hath ordained for them to walk in; or to be zealous of good works, or to bear the fruits of the Spirit—joy, love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, would be a sort of mockery which we dare not impute to God. Surely to bear the fruits of the Spirit a man must have the Spirit. God must give the Spirit before He calls upon a man to follow Him, to walk in Him, to be guided by Him, and to submit to Him. Therefore, S. Paul writes, “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, FATHER, and, because ye are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His SON into your hearts. Now He Which hath anointed us is God, Who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body.” “We have access by one Spirit to the FATHER.” “Ye are for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” “Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.” And a parallel passage to our text, “We are bound to give thanks

to GOD always for you, brethren beloved of the LORD, because GOD hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit. GOD hath chosen you to salvation in one place : he hath chosen you to obedience in another place. How? Both alike say, and all the other passages say, "through sanctification of the Spirit;" that is, having chosen you to salvation, inasmuch as no unclean thing can be saved, He hath put His Spirit in the hearts of the elect, that is, in your hearts, that you may become holy and meet to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in heaven.

And our Church teaches the same thing in the sentence already quoted. I believe in GOD the HOLY GHOST, Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of GOD. This instruction is intended for us all: it is to be learnt as early as possible. It is the first lesson which the Church gives to her young members; and she teaches them these two things. First, that they are elected to salvation; and secondly, that in order to their becoming such as may be saved, GOD has sanctified them by His Spirit, "Who sanctifieth me."

Let me in passing mention two reasons why it is necessary to believe with Holy Scripture and the Church, that Christians are sanctified, or receive the Spirit in their childhood.

1. The first is that our children are all expected to serve God, to renounce the devil, keep the Commandments, and believe the faith. Are you prepared to tell your children that it is not required of them to serve God? No; you teach them what is right, and you think them able to do it. But they are not able to do it without the Spirit: you can only expect them to carry into practice what you enjoin, by the Spirit. S. Paul assures us that "no man can say that JESUS is the CHRIST, but by the HOLY GHOST." You all think a child capable of receiving this great truth, that JESUS is the CHRIST; but if he be, it is the Spirit Who has made him capable, for he is not capable of himself—"none can say that JESUS is the CHRIST, but by the HOLY GHOST." Either your child can receive this and similar truths, or he cannot. If he can, he must have the Spirit; for it is the Spirit only Who teaches them. But if he have not the Spirit and cannot,

then there is a stop to Christian education. Why labour in vain? Why teach a stone? Why talk to the dead? The Spirit of God alone gives the capacity of receiving Christian truth; if He be not in a child, that child cannot say that JESUS is the CHRIST; cannot receive the Gospel, resist sin, or be holy. Fortunately, indeed, in this, as in many other instances, men's theory and practice stand opposed one to the other: they deny grace to children, and yet they teach them things which they cannot receive without grace: they gather them into schools, they lay before them the Bible, they expect them to believe and act upon Christian truth, and yet take from them that Spirit by Whom alone they can apprehend the least and lightest,—like that King of Egypt who commanded the full tale of bricks, but took away the wherewith that task could only be accomplished.

This, then, is one reason why it is necessary to believe that God has graciously bestowed His Spirit on our children. In order that they may be reared up as Christians, they must have the power and capacity of receiving and acting upon the truths of the Gospel. This they have not naturally:

the Spirit of God bestows all this : they cannot say that JESUS is the CHRIST but by the HOLY GHOST.

2. And now for our other reason. When God takes away any of your children from you in their early years, you have a confident belief that they are saved. But what says S. Paul : “ If any have not the Spirit of CHRIST he is none of His.” The man, therefore, who says concerning any infant dying that he has not the Spirit, shuts him out from salvation ; for we cannot evade the words, they are very plain,—“ If a person have not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of His.” If, then, your dying child goes to heaven, he has the Spirit ; for without it he cannot go. This is a great comfort to those who believe heartily what the Church teaches—that all children baptized and dying before they commit actual sin are undoubtedly saved : for we believe that CHRIST hath bestowed upon them that Spirit which is necessary.

“ If a man have not the Spirit of CHRIST he is none of His ;” here is the thing wanted, the Spirit must be had ; “ We are all baptized by one Spirit into one body :” here is the

thing supplied, the Spirit is given ; and thus we are certain about our children, because they have received that which is necessary, they are washed, justified, sanctified, glorified, and have not since lost their gifts by sin. But as it regards others who deny baptismal grace, I confess I do not know what hopes they entertain about their dying children. I would ask, have they the Spirit of CHRIST ? and if you say yes, I would inquire farther, when given ? upon what promise do you rely ? and if you say, you do not know, you are uncertain, you hope for the best, I would ask, is this all you have gained, by going away from the Catholic Faith, uncertainty for certainty ; no belief, no knowledge, no fixed conviction about them at all ; instead of the firm assurance that they are happy ?

It is necessary then for the true consolation of parents about their children, it is necessary for the hopeful education of them in the ways of CHRIST, that we do not doubt the presence of God's Spirit in their hearts ; for without the Spirit, they can neither go to heaven if they die, nor be brought up as Christians if they live.

Why cannot they go to heaven if they die? Because, "if a man have not the Spirit of CHRIST he is none of His." Why cannot they be reared as Christians, if they live? Because "no man can say that JESUS is the CHRIST, but by the HOLY GHOST."

3. And this conducts me very naturally to the third point: supposing people to grow up, and to have passed the unconscious time of childhood, what is the immediate object of their sanctification? for what purpose is the Spirit given? The text informs us, "Unto obedience and sprinkling of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST."

The Apostle is thought to allude here to the covenant GOD made with Israel, which was confirmed by the sprinkling of blood. The people said, "All that the LORD hath said, we will do and be obedient." This was their part, they engaged themselves to obey GOD, on the understanding and acknowledgment, that if they did not obey Him they were not to receive any of the good things promised; and to this agreement, or covenant, or understanding, GOD put His seal by the sprinkling of blood, "and Moses took the blood and sprinkled it

on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which God hath made with you concerning these words :'' that is, by this blood, God binds you to the obligation of obeying Him, or of losing His favours ; and in the same manner it is thought S. Peter means to say, CHRIST hath bound you to obedience by *His* Blood. God hath made a new covenant, and come to a new understanding with you. He hath freely taken you into His family, He hath done away your old sins, He hath given you a new heart, He hath sanctified you by His Spirit, and opened to you heaven ; but in order to secure heaven you must obey Him ; at the very commencement these obligations were laid before you, that you renounce the devil, believe the faith, keep the commandments ; this is your part, this is your engagement, this is the understanding, as it were, between you and God ; depart from it, you are lost ; abide by it, and you have glory ; and this covenant CHRIST hath confirmed and signed with His Blood.

Another meaning is, that the Spirit hath been given to us, in order that we may obey and so be pardoned ; in either case the

result is the same, that without obeying CHRIST none shall be saved.

Let me then in concluding, address a few words to those who think they shall be saved without obedience. It cannot be denied that this is a fearfully large number. Every man who puts off repentance, thinks he can be saved without obedience ; for if he keeps putting it off, when does he hope to obey ? Obedience cannot be crowded into an hour, any more than a servant can perform the year's work in one day. Good servants are constantly industrious ; good sons and daughters are constantly dutiful ; and it is by their conduct day after day, through weeks, and months, and years, that their characters become formed, and the master judges of them. So is it in Christian obedience ; through evil and good report, under encouragement or the contrary, with or against our inclination, through the weeks and months, and years of our life it goes on ; only becoming more strict and conscientious and regular, with the passage of time.

But how can a man do this ? How has he any *opportunity* of doing this, if he puts off religion to the last moment of his life. Such

persons must certainly think that they shall be saved, even though they take no care to obey the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and keep His commandments. Again : Are there not persons who arrive at the same deceit in another way ? who are not careful to inquire whether they keep the commandments of CHRIST, whether they obey Him, whether they study His will, are subduing sin, and putting on holy practices, these form no part of their inquiries, but only whether they *feel* in a particular manner : whether they feel at one time horror, at another time peace, at another time assurance ? but these too put aside obedience altogether ; they put aside what is commanded for that which is invented, CHRIST'S rule for their own ; and so both he who *delays* and he who does *without* obedience, equally resist the truth of our text : “ Elect according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the Spirit, *unto obedience* and sprinkling of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST : ” as they do all other texts of a like sort : “ To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life ; ” “ Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we

should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." S. Paul tells us that God wrought by him "to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed." S. Peter says, "that God has given the HOLY GHOST to them that obey Him." "CHRIST is the Author," it is said in the Hebrews, "of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him." And how are the people described upon whom at the last day He takes vengeance? "Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

The truth is, that obedience of heart and life to the LORD JESUS CHRIST—the watching and praying thereunto with all perseverance—the conforming ourselves more closely to His pattern and example, is what the angels desire to see, and devils hinder. Many are the obstacles thrown in a man's way if he would take up this Christian life, many easier paths are set before him, many more sudden ways to the goal; nay, perhaps he is persuaded that such a life upon earth is needless; and thrice fortunate is he if, as a bird from the snare of the fowler, he escape from these delusions. Thrice fortunate if he

but find, and choose, and persevere in that path which so few discover—the strait road of obedience. Obedience proves the presence of all other good, and all other graces ; it proves the presence of the Spirit of God, for without the Spirit we could not obey ; it proves that CHRIST's purpose concerning us is being accomplished, and that we have good hopes of heaven. For He shed His blood, bought us and sanctified us, that we might obey—“*unto obedience:*” the end then is accomplished. Our obedience to CHRIST proves that we have faith, for we should not obey Him except we believed in Him ; and, above all, it proves our love ; for if a man love Me, he will keep My Commandments. And remember, that if a man has not obedience he has none of these, whatever he may say ; he deceives himself and others ; he has no faith, nor love, nor a good hope of heaven ; if he does not remember that he is elect through “*sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.*”

My brethren, comfort yourselves with the thought that God hath elected, chosen, and separated you from the rest of the world. “Children we are of grace,” says the Catechism, “in high favour with God.” Comfort

yourselves with the thought, that as an earnest and pledge of His good will to you He has "sanctified you." He has put His HOLY SPIRIT in your hearts; but inasmuch as we are not stocks and stones, but free to do wrong or right—to choose heaven or hell, remember, too, for what the Spirit is given you, that you may obey and follow His admonitions; that you may listen to His voice; for they only who are led by the Spirit, that is, who follow His leading, are the sons of God—such sons as shall reign with Him in heaven. There is no condemnation, we are told, to Christians who *walk after* the Spirit—those Christians, not who have had only, but who *through* the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, shall live. Indeed, though we have received the Spirit, it is but too likely that we resist Him, and do not follow Him or obey Him. Ah, be afraid of quenching the Spirit. It is a sad thing to receive the grace of God in vain; for then, though elect, we shall not have made our election sure—though elect, like the Israelites of old, we shall not enter into God's rest.

SERMON XIX.

REVERENCE DUE TO CHURCHES.

S. MARK XI. 15.

“AND THEY COME TO JERUSALEM: AND JESUS WENT INTO THE TEMPLE, AND BEGAN TO CAST OUT THEM THAT SOLD AND BOUGHT IN THE TEMPLE, AND OVERTHREW THE TABLES OF THE MONEY-CHANGERS, AND THE SEATS OF THEM THAT SOLD DOVES; AND WOULD NOT SUFFER THAT ANY MAN SHOULD CARRY ANY VESSEL THROUGH THE TEMPLE. AND HE TAUGHT, SAYING UNTO THEM, IS IT NOT WRITTEN, MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED OF ALL NATIONS THE HOUSE OF PRAYER? BUT YE HAVE MADE IT A DEN OF THIEVES.”

You have heard the above verses read to you in the second lesson for the day, and what is the unusual picture which they bring to our eyes? We see the countenance of the meek and lowly Jesus filled with indignation: His manner and tone of mind, and

all His feelings, were for the most part gentle and loving. We have seen Him sitting as Judge over an adulteress, and He hath not condemned her. His disciples wanted the fire of heaven to descend upon an ungrateful and perverse city, but He reproached them as yet not being acquainted with the new spirit of mercy and charity, which He came to spread through the earth. He had just been lamenting with tears the miseries which threatened Jerusalem, that criminal city, the murderer of the prophets, and which was just on the eve of sealing her doom, by the execution of the SON OF GOD. On every occasion He has seemed merciful, and what He proclaimed Himself to be—"The Prince of Peace." "Learn of Me," has been His language, "for I am meek and lowly of heart."

What, then, are the outrages which now triumph over all His clemency, and arm His gracious hand with the rod of justice and of wrath? He had come to Jerusalem; and, that He might be in this, as in everything else, our perfect example, He took His way through the crowded streets to the house of His FATHER; He taught us, you will observe, that in every city our first resort should be

to the temple of God. That is our first duty, our first privilege, our first blessing : thither if we go to pray, we shall come forth armed against temptation, and be clothed with the defence of God's strength and power. But what did the REDEEMER behold in that temple, which men ought not to approach save for purposes of worship? did He behold a multitude of pious suppliants assembled together for God's glory? were the sounds which met His ear those of joyous praise, or scarce audible penitence? Alas ! God's temple was profaned. It was turned into a place for buying and selling : it was a place where that precept was broken daily : "Ye shall not receive usury or interest." There, seeing the Jews from the distant provinces could not bring with them the victims which they desired to offer in sacrifice to God, the Priests took care to provide animals, which they first sold for money, and then received back again for their own uses : there, seeing a great number, especially the poor, could not purchase, the usurers were always ready to lend at an exorbitant interest. And these things were carried on within the precincts and walls of that House consecrated to the

sole and daily adoration of God. This it was which moved our SAVIOUR's indignation. Many other things took place in that destined city: many deeds of darkness and of evil which we short-sighted men should pronounce more revolting to the Majesty of heaven; but these things moved Him not from His calm and equal demeanour. It was the profanation of His FATHER's dwelling-place on earth, the mingling unholy things with divine, the conversion of the temple into a market place, the supplanting devotion and holy prayer on that venerable, awful spot, by worldliness, barter, and merchandise. These were the things which kindled His wrath, and darted from His eyes those terrible fires (to be seen again by the wicked at the last day) which struck that multitude with terror, and made them quail before His presence with trembling amazement.

Now, brethren, the principle which our Blessed LORD at this time vindicated must be always true—that the House of our FATHER and God is to be revered. This, then, will be the subject of our discourse. I shall first give you some reasons for behaving with reverence towards the House of

God, and then speak of the methods in which that reverence may be shown.

In this building, then, and in others similar to this, all those principal transactions take place which have to do with our everlasting welfare. Man has two employments in the present scene: the one earthly, the other of Heaven: the one pertaining to the body, the other to the soul: and as the world generally is the place where He treats with man, and makes cautious provisions for the well-being of the body, so is this the chief appointed place for the business of heaven, and for securing those advantages which are great, but unspeakable.

1. Here, to take the first point in our spiritual history, here we are baptized. Born into the world in a state of sin, in a state of wrath, and slaves of the devil; born mere worldly beings, only fitted for and having no heritage but the earth: hither we are brought by our believing parents and pious sponsors, and in the face of the congregation, and of angels looking on, and of CHRIST Who is present, we are made what our Catechism so truly and soundly teaches, the children of grace. Here, then, or in a church like unto

this, we were first engrafted into the invisible world. Here, our eyes were made to see unusual sights, and our ears to hear unusual sounds, even the sights and sounds of the New Jerusalem,—that glorious land, that blessed people. Here we were made one with the great company of the saints, with the army of the martyrs, and with the manifold order of spirits, rising one above another till you come to the cherubim and seraphim. Here we became first entitled to the love of God, and the redemption which is by CHRIST, and the sanctification of the HOLY GHOST. Here all those blessings were made ours, were ratified, were sealed, were made ours inalienably, to be cancelled only by sin, which the LORD in wondrous compassion hath made the lot of His chosen. Ought we not, then, to feel an awful and deep interest in the place where all these mercies have been bestowed; where we have been set free from Adam's stain, and admitted to the light; where we have been delivered from the original curse, and obtained a blessing; where we have been saved from the bondage of the devil, and been made the free sons of God; where, in short, the utterly lost and ruined

were reinstated in their heritage, and again placed in their native home?

2. And here, my brethren, when our reason and understanding are in some degree developed, and the power of ascertaining and accepting truth, man's peculiar privilege, begins to awaken; here we are to approach the sacred fount of inspiration, and drink in knowledge from the oracles of God. Here you are taught, line upon line, and precept upon precept, the wisdom desired by sages, and which the prophets longed to look into in vain, "which," writes S. Paul, "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto the holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Formerly the ALMIGHTY called Moses up into the mount, and there amidst lightnings and thunders He delivered to him the law; but to you week after week is read and preached in this place, the Gospel of Him Who died, and the message of mercy. And ought we not to respect the place where the ALMIGHTY speaks? Ought we not to listen with reverence, when although we behold nothing with our outward senses, but men like ourselves, and the ambassador is weak and

unworthy to do his office, yet the King of Kings is here by his side, and by so worthless an instrument, speaks His commandment ?

3. Nor do we here only listen to His command, and drink in His divine doctrine like the dew, but here we profess to do Him homage, and to fall low on our knees before His footstool. Here we resort, or should resort, to acknowledge our sins, to smite on our breasts, to praise Him for past mercies, to entreat Him for spiritual help, and to promise amendment. And on these occasions, though but two or three meet together, He has promised to hearken. They are His own words, "There am I in the midst of you." This is what the wise king in opening the temple hath taught us to expect. "May Thine eyes be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof Thou hast said, that Thou wouldst put Thy name there : to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place. My God, let, I beseech Thee, Thine eyes be open, and let Thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place." We are very feeble and cannot help ourselves, we are in many respects evil, but cannot forgive ourselves ;

we want to be provided with happiness hereafter, but cannot of ourselves scale the heavens for it, or accomplish its attainment. But God has told us to pray, to pray earnestly and often, and then for the sake of the blood of His SON, He will do it. We are to feel our dependence, we are to lean on His arm, we are to confide in His love, we are to be pierced with the conviction of our helplessness and His power, and our distress and longings are to find utterance in prayer. And then to such prayers, and such convictions, to such sincerity, and such earnestness, He represents Himself as listening eagerly. He represents Himself, as it were, bending down from the highest heavens, observing our gestures, watching our lips, and penetrating the secret depths of our thoughts and heart. Here, here in this place, is He thus observant, what an awfulness should be attached to it ! How should you be careful and reverent when here, and “keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God !” “My house is a house of prayer.” “There am I in the midst of them.”

4. Nor must I pass by, when mentioning the great things which take place in this

house, and which give to it a different character, and should excite in us a different feeling, from what we experience upon entering any other building, however majestic, that here is offered up that feast and sacrifice peculiar to Christians, which commemorate the sacrifice made on the cross. Others, namely, our fathers in religion, the Jewish people, the sons of Abraham and David have had the word read to them every sabbath day, have had a house in which they could adore God, have worshipped Him solemnly, and offered up their victims of bulls and goats. "The continual memorial of the sacrifice of the death of CHRIST," is the great and singular rite of Christianity. We have temples erected, we have altars set up, we have Priests ordained, in succession, from age to age, that this great rite, the crown and sum of our solemnities, may be duly administered, and never cease whilst the world stands. Here, then, is another reason for exceeding reverence, that in this house, to use the language of the Catechism, "the Body and Blood of CHRIST are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful," that here, "we spiritually eat the flesh of

CHRIST, and drink His blood, we dwell in CHRIST and CHRIST in us, we are one with CHRIST and CHRIST with us ;” that here in the words of S. Paul, as often as we eat this bread, and drink this cup, we do show forth CHRIST’s death till He come. Behold, as often as the Holy Communion is celebrated, CHRIST comes down among us ; since He was given, not merely to die for us once on the cross, but to be for ever “ our spiritual food and sustenance in that Holy Sacrament.” Here is the divine victim ; here the health and life of man ; here the precious blood ; here the strengthening and refreshing of souls. O how reverently should we deal with and approach that house, where the SON of God comes. “ And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

5. And shall I not add, one other reason for affectionate yet solemn feeling towards the Churches of God, that here the dead are lying ; and that here are treasured up unto the dawn of the resurrection, all the earthly re-

mains of those you loved. Behold the last roof under which they were sheltered, the last receptacle before the grave ; these worn and aged walls, alike witnesses of their baptism and burial. Here, or in a place similar to this, took place the first important act in their life and the last : and here your own remains shall be, and here you shall sleep, God knows how long, and man shall be added to man, till every atom of dust within and without, is a seed which shall live. Dear and venerable resting place of our relations, how should we cherish it ! Awful depository of the members of JESUS CHRIST, who shall one day arise and be assembled in heaven, how should we revere it !

Such are some of the reasons why we should reverence the Churches in which we assemble. Let me now in conclusion, refer to the methods by which we can show that we have a becoming sense of God's Presence and Majesty.

1. In the first place, if we have that respectful feeling which I have desired to inculcate, and which is pleasant to God, our hearts will be in a state of adoration and worship. We shall not permit, at least willingly,

and if they intrude we shall strive against them, vain and idle thoughts or dreams from the world. It must sadly be confessed that our thoughts too often wander; that they are away from our occupation; that they are on the sea, or in the city, or in the green fields, with business or with pleasure; that for a time, perhaps, amidst psalms and praises, we are utterly lost and absent, and neither hear the sound nor catch the sense: and I say not, for we are frail and have lost our original excellence, and our powers of devotion are weakened by the fall,—I say not that we can altogether, in the present world, remedy this, or arrive at the enviable condition of those, the ever-rapt and adoring angels, who, we are told, rest not day or night, saying, “Holy, holy, holy, LORD God of Hosts, which was, and is, and is to come;” and yet he who is impressed with the feeling that God is here, and that He beholds the heart, will at least aim at this perfection. And this is all God looks for: He expects you to rest your soul upon Him as far as you can; He expects you to forbid your thoughts from wandering, by His help, as far as you are able: at all events, He warns

you not to encourage, or indulge, other thoughts than those of religion ; for this is to profane His sanctuary, and insult His honour.

2. And then if the spirit of devotion fill the soul, it will make itself manifest in the outward gesture : for the body is the soul's instrument, and complies with the biddings of that which dwells within, even the immortal part of us, whether it be for evil or for good. Out of the heart, it is said, are the issues of life ; and again, out of the heart proceed adulteries and so forth. If the spirit strike the keys, the whole body will respond ; it, like the inner man, will be devotional, grave, serious, attentive, instead of being careless and irreverent in the house of God.

3. Lastly. When a man considers that this is God's house ; when he considers Who God is ; when he reflects on the purposes for which it is set apart, to be the audience chamber of the ALMIGHTY when He treats with man ; that here he was reconciled to the FATHER, made a member of CHRIST, and sanctified by the SPIRIT ; that here God speaks to him, as from His heavenly Throne ; that he may lay before Him here his sup-

plications ; that here our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST comes by a mysterious presence, and that here are deposited the ashes of the dead ; it is probable that he will desire the house of God to be in some degree worthy of its Divine possessor. We certainly for the most part lavish our treasures on those we love ; and it can be no proof of our love to God, that we give Him a house insignificant and mean. If an earthly prince choose to honour a subject, what expense is spared ? what a cost of silver and gold, of gems and of raiment, of furniture and attendants. Ought the ALMIGHTY to be less honoured when He comes ? should His royal palace be less glorious ? It is not sufficiently considered, brethren, that the meanness of churches, their dilapidated condition, their mouldering walls and sunken roofs, their interior wretchedness and inappropriateness for divine worship : if they do not show an absence of love, and a decay of zeal for God's service, at least show that the generation which tolerates them entertains an inadequate notion of what the SAVIOUR deserves at their hands, and of that which is befitting the worship of the

ALMIGHTY. "Touching God Himself, hath He anywhere revealed that it is His delight to live beggarly?"* Gold and gems were poured out on the tabernacle in the wilderness. Solomon's temple was more gorgeous than we can imagine. And when the Jews in the days of their calamity, and out of their deep distress, raised the second temple, those, we are informed, who had seen the former wept for its inferiority; wept because they could not raise a temple worthy JEHOVAH. For love and true reverence will give Him everything—that inward devotion of which I have spoken, that reverence of behaviour and of the body, which must follow, for "He would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple;" and lastly, that care for the temple itself, which would make it in some degree meet for the earthly dwelling place of God, for the assembling of His people, and the administration of His Sacraments.

* Hooker.

SERMON XX.

THE RESURRECTION.

1 COR. xv. 20.

**"BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND
BECOME THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT."**

THE event which we celebrate to-day is of the greatest possible importance—a greater never happened—the whole Gospel depends upon it. The birth of CHRIST, the life of CHRIST, the passion and death of CHRIST, would have profited us nothing unless there had been also a resurrection of CHRIST. S. Paul says himself, "If CHRIST be not raised, your faith is vain."

For first, consider that before His death He had made this promise, "After three days I will rise again." What if He had not

fulfilled it? See you not, that all He had said before—all His preaching, all His invitations, yea, all His other promises would have been nothing. He says, "Come unto Me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He says, "He that followeth Me shall never perish." He says, "Whoso heareth My words, and doeth them, hath built his house upon a rock." Men are invited to trust in these promises, but they would answer, He made also another promise, the test of His mission from heaven, that He would rise on the third day; but He never rose, He never fulfilled it. What security, therefore, have we that His other promises will be made good to us? why follow vain hopes? Thus the Gospel would have been despised, and our religion have come to nought. How clearly was this seen by His enemies: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, whilst He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." And then they asked for a guard to watch the sepulchre, saying what was perfectly true, that if He was believed to have risen, according to His promise; if, indeed, He performed this mightiest of miracles; if He, the mangled,

bleeding, breathless JESUS raised His own body from the grave, and appeared in His natural form, the Gospel was established for ever ; nothing could resist it. On the contrary, if He failed of His promise, no trouble need be taken : it would die, and decline, and go out as a candle in its socket.

Again. He said that He should satisfy God by His death for the sins of the whole world ; so that now you or I, or any one, on fulfilling the conditions of the Gospel, that is, repenting, believing, and becoming new creatures, shall be accepted, justified, glorified, on account of the merits and worthiness of the blood then shed. But a debtor who has paid his debts is released from prison : he is set free—no more debts, no more imprisonment. CHRIST'S resurrection, then, was necessary, in order to show us that He had paid the great debt due to God ; that God was satisfied with Him ; that hell, that death, that the devil had no more claims on Him. We should not have known that He had achieved the victory, had He not come back to us ; but now we know that death could not hold Him, that hell could not hold Him, nor Satan detain Him ; for He

hath come at the time He said from their dismal regions.

There are many other reasons, but these two will suffice for the present to show why it was quite necessary for our Blessed SAVIOUR to return from the dead. First, because He had *promised* to do so ; and He must *fulfil* His promise. If He did not fulfil this promise, how could we know whether He would fulfil others ; and secondly, because this was the only way of assuring us that He had paid our debts. If He had paid them, God would let Him go free, since there was no ground for detaining Him longer ; if He had not paid them, God would keep Him as our surety fast bound in the lower parts of the earth ; He would never escape again ; He would never arise.

If, then, it was so necessary that CHRIST should arise from the dead, did He arise ? Did He on the third day return ? Is the text a truth—"Now is CHRIST risen from the dead ?" I trust you all believe that He did so ; I trust you firmly hold this article of your Creed ; but because now and then it is well to go over the proofs on which our religion is founded, that in S. Luke's words,

“You may know the certainty of the things wherein you have been instructed,” I will briefly mention this afternoon some of the chief proofs that JESUS CHRIST is risen from the dead.

If, brethren, any one of your most beloved friends had been laid to rest in this church-yard two days ago, and some one at this moment were to tell you that he was alive again, what would be your feeling? At first you would not believe it: it is unusual, it is strange. You would have the most painful doubts: gradually you would ask for the proof of this, and you would require the most certain proof. You would be sure that people on whose testimony you could rely had seen him, had walked with, had conversed with him.

Now we are told of CHRIST that He has risen from the dead—what proof is there of it?

Take, then, the sacred Scriptures. On Friday eve Joseph of Arimathæa went to Pilate, and begged the body of JESUS, and took it down from the Cross, and wrapped it in spices, and laid it in his sepulchre. There it lay that night, and there it rested all yesterday, the day of rest. This morning,

as it began to dawn, certain women—S. Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary—went out from Jerusalem to the sepulchre ; and what found they ? No soldiers, as on the previous day, keeping them at a distance, but the angel of the LORD : and what said he ? “ Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek JESUS that was crucified ; He is not here, for He is risen ; come see the place where the LORD lay.” This, then, was the first thing that met their sight:—the trembling and half-dead keepers, the glorious angel, the stone rolled away, and the empty tomb. What must have been their feelings ? first of surprise, then of joy, then of anxious desire to communicate the good news to others. “ They went, then, from the sepulchre,” says S. Matthew, “ quickly, with fear and great joy : and did run to bring the disciples word.” So wonderful and extraordinary was the event, that, though our LORD had prepared them before His death, the eleven were at first incredulous. “ Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.” But S. Peter and S. John had more faith : they immediately ran to the sepulchre, to see with their own eyes. These were the second

witnesses. Manifestly the LORD was gone. There were the linen clothes lying which wrapped His crucified body in one place; in another place, by itself, the napkin which had been round His head. For himself, S. John says, this was enough, "he saw and believed, and the disciples went to their own home."

All that we have hitherto found is that the tomb was empty. Of this there were two sets of witnesses, nay there were three, and the last the chiefest of all—His very enemies, the soldiers—who confessed it to their employers, and whom they tried to bribe into silence. Hitherto no one had seen the LORD; but now, when S. Peter and S. John had left the sepulchre, we read that Mary Magdalene remained behind them—she lingered round the tomb—she feared some one had taken Him away—she did not yet apprehend the resurrection; and she wept bitter and sorrowful tears. At length, turning herself round, she sees one before her. Who is this? It was JESUS, saith the sacred text; but she knew not that it was JESUS. JESUS saith unto her, "Mary:" she turned herself and said, "Rabboni," which is to say, Master.

“Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the LORD, and that He had spoken these things to her.” Here was the first eye-witness that the dead was alive—the lost found.

But perhaps the other disciples did not believe this single witness: she was only a woman, and might have been deceived. Well, S. John tells us that in the evening of the same day *all* the disciples were assembled in one room, with the doors fast closed, for fear of the Jews: and suddenly JESUS stood in the midst, and said, “Peace be unto you.” Still it might not be JESUS—it might be some other person; although, who but God—who but some one having power supernatural—could thus through bars, and bolts, and walls, appear in the midst of them? How, then, could they be better assured that it was He? Thus: “When He had so said, He showed them His hands and His sides.” Here were the very hands nailed to the Cross; here was the very side wounded by the soldier’s spear. Was it not true that JESUS had risen indeed? “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the LORD.”

But now, though the rest of the Apostles

were present, one of them was away—S. Thomas. He comes in after; they tell him of the LORD's appearance; he is doubtful of it; he is loud in unbelief. "No," he says, "I cannot believe it; nay, except I shall see in His hands the prints of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." This was what he required; and JESUS grants it. "Eight days after the disciples were again within, and Thomas with them: then came JESUS, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be unto you." "Then saith He to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless but believing." And Thomas answered, "My LORD, and my God."

Again. On the day when our LORD arose, two disciples left Jerusalem to go to a little village, called Emmaus. As they walk, a stranger joins them; He asks them of their conversation, and why they were dispirited and sad. They tell Him what had happened; and coming to their house, invite Him to enter. He goes with them. "And it came

to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to them ; and their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight." Lo ! then another appearance of JESUS ; lo ! He performs the very act that He did the night before His death ;—He took bread, He brake it, He blessed. He, as it were, repeats the Sacrament. In that act He was made known to them ; and then He vanishes from their sight. And they said one to another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked to us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures ?"

Once more. Let us place ourselves in thought by the sea of Tiberias, and see, not far from the shore, a boat filled with men. There are Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. They have been fishing all night, and have caught nothing. Suddenly a figure stands upon the shore, and a voice says, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find ; they cast, therefore, and now were not able to draw for the multitude of the fishes." Here was a repetition of the

miracle of the draught of fishes ; thus they were reminded Who this person was. S. John said to S. Peter, "It is the LORD." Presently we find all the disciples on the shore, and the LORD taking meat with them ; thus showing not only by conversing, not only by the wounds in His hands and side, but by eating and drinking with them, that He was human ; that He was flesh and bones ; that the same JESUS Who was dead had risen ; that He had fulfilled His promise.

After their meal, the LORD gave S. Peter some instructions concerning the Church : "Feed My sheep." And so He remained on earth forty days, giving the apostles various lessons from time to time how they were to set up and guide His flock, and perfect them in divine knowledge, and showing Himself to them in divers manners, that His Resurrection might be established. The last time they saw Him was at His ascension : He led them as far as the Mount of Olives. The mount which had seen His agony, saw also His glory. He was carried away from their sight, yet *in* their sight. Now, or at some other time, S. Paul says, five hundred brethren saw Him at once. As Elisha saw

Elijah, so did they behold Him visibly ascend. Surely CHRIST is risen. "He showed Himself alive," S. Luke writes, "after His passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

Thus certain it is, my brethren, that CHRIST is risen from the dead: and now what should be our feelings? Those of joy—the greatest, deepest joy. The ancient Christians would meet one another on Easter morning with this expression, "CHRIST is risen." Thus they expressed their gladness, as we should rejoice at the triumph of any one we loved, who perhaps by others had been hardly and cruelly treated. Betrayed by His friends, left by His disciples, scorned by the multitude, buffeted by the soldiers, His holy brow torn with thorns, His sacred side pierced with a spear; laid in the grave as one put aside for ever; are you not glad that He hath defeated His enemies, that He hath risen in triumph? This is one cause of joy, because His sufferings are over, because He hath now joy Whose cup was so full of sorrow.

But joy again, because by His resurrection

CHRIST hath assured us that we shall arise. "I," He says, "am the resurrection and the life: I will Myself arise, and then I will raise you." True, we must all die, as our SAVIOUR died, and be buried as He was buried; we must lie down in the grave when our hour comes; we must moulder into dust; we must mingle our ashes with our fathers. Years may pass, and generations may pass, and new races successively, through childhood, and joyous youth, and hoary age, shall lie down by our sides, and wait in the silent tomb the great day of our God. But joy! for the day of the resurrection shall come: CHRIST shall appear in heaven with His glorious angels, and the dead shall rise. The trumpet shall sound, says S. Paul; CHRIST hath brought to light life and immortality; this corruptible of ours shall be clothed with incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality; our mortal bodies shall be changed into the likeness of His glorious Body; mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Lo! the graves opening, and the dead arising in every part of the world; lo! multitudes upon multitudes thronging one another, covering the earth in myriads as

they burst from their dark tombs, all following CHRIST; for CHRIST is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

And yet joy once more, because upon this high festival CHRIST having died for our sins; hath risen for our justification; for of what use, to cleanse us from our sins, unless also He make us new creatures, unless He renew us by His grace, and make us thereby glorious and just? CHRIST hath risen from the dead, and raised our souls from sin. Thus we see that it is a risen SAVIOUR; it is CHRIST sitting on high, Who is our life, Who quickens our souls, Who sends down the HOLY GHOST, Who delivers from sin, from its power and punishment, its sting and its bondage; "for ye are dead, and your life is hid with CHRIST in God." The secret source of your life is invisible, it is hidden; it is above in the skies, it is hidden with CHRIST in God. From thence it comes down upon your souls, and quickens and makes alive. Blessed is he who follows those inward stirrings from a risen SAVIOUR. "Blessed is he who hath part in this first resurrection;" for this is what is meant by the first resurrection

— the rising from sin to follow CHRIST. “It is a resurrection from sin. So S. Augustine takes this place, and with him many of the Fathers, and with them many of the sons of the Fathers, the expositors of the reformed Church, they for the most part take the first resurrection to be a resurrection from sin.”* And this must precede the other; we must experience the first resurrection, or we shall not the second; we must rise from sin, or we shall not to glory. Have ye experienced this first resurrection? Have ye risen from sin and left it behind you, as JESUS CHRIST His grave clothes on this day? “If ye then be risen with CHRIST,” says S. Paul, “seek those things which are above, where CHRIST sitteth on the right hand of God.” And “in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God: likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.” Oh joy, that we may, if it be not our own fault, if we only feel after CHRIST, and follow Him, and obey Him—joy that we *may*, through His quickening power, die unto sin and live unto

* Dr. Donne.

righteousness; and thus have part in the first resurrection! Oh joy again, that having experienced the first, we shall experience the second; that our body and soul shall be united, and we dwell in the regions of glory. And, lastly, joy that this hath been accomplished by our SAVIOUR'S victory; for "CHRIST hath risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

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